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The Oxford Book Of American Verse

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THE OXFORD BOOK OF AMERICAN VERSE

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Chosen and Edited by

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PREFACE

THE chief purpose of a prefatory note to an anthology is to make due acknowledgment to the poets and publishers who have permitted the use of their property. For their courteous co-operation in the present instance, I am glad to join The Oxford University Press in this expression of thanks.

A brief word may be added as to the work itself. The Oxford Book of American Verse does not attempt to be in the least encyclopaedic. It is a comparatively small anthology, and cannot pretend to compete with a work such as Mr. Stedman's invaluable book was in its day, and still is for the period it covers; nor does it compare for our own time with the thorough and extensive compendium of Miss Monroe and Mrs. Henderson.

The Oxford Book, after the manner of anthologies, takes a much more skimming view of the whole field of American verse, and it must be confessed a rather more irresponsible one. Not that I have felt licensed to indulge any waywardness or perversity of preference in making the selections. On the contrary, since I have been given so free a hand, I have felt all the more a need for judicious care, and for a fineness of poetic judgment much more accurate than will here appear.

Some years ago I was employed with others in compiling a ten-volume work entitled The World's Best Poetry. A number of eminent men were to be engaged to edit the various volumes, and we wanted James Whitcomb Riley to take charge of the volume of Humorous Verse.

" Oh, no! " he said. " No, I couldn't do that! Why, there are four hundred poets right here in Indiana, and every one of them is a personal friend of mine! "

I must confess to feeling a keen sympathy with Mr. Riley's embarrassing state of mind.

If the making of an anthology could be put in the hands of an ideal anthologist of infallible taste, how happy we should all be! At least theoretically. As a matter of fact we must usually put up with a taste that is anything but infallible, as I am uneasily aware. There will doubtless be many lovers of poetry and students of this Oxford Book who will wish in their disappointment and dissatisfaction that they could have had the task of making the selections themselves. I can only reply that in moments of misgiving I sincerely wish they had.

I would gladly have included here many beautiful poems of which I am fond, particularly among those of more recent years, and yet I have had to refrain for one reason or another. Sometimes our courteous copyright allowance for any one author was exhausted, and sometimes I had to check my enthusiasm for this favorite author or that from an unwillingness to run into an undue excess. I shall never open the Oxford Book without missing " The Blue Flag in Bog " and other poems which I perhaps too extravagantly admire, nor without grudging the space given to a number of productions of an earlier age " which no gentleman's library should be without." For after all an anthologist, no matter how much leeway he may be accorded, is not commissioned to please himself alone.

In reading the final proofs of the Book I have been struck again by what seemed to me the most significant difference between the old poetry and the new. The old poetry by

comparison was to so great an extent imbued with a doleful spirit, or with a desperate resignation at best. In spite of the orthodoxy of the conventional age which produced it, the poetry of those days shows for the most part little of the valiant and joyous spirit which we find in the verse of our own times. And in view of our present spiritual needs I could not help recalling Matthew Arnold's declaration that "the future of poetry is immense," and the saying of Emerson, that serene seraph and our first prophet of a larger life of the spirit, that poetry has by no means all been written, but rather is still only in its beginning.

With the more confidence, then, I offer this modest compilation to that younger generation of poetry lovers, so many of whom I have had the pleasure of knowing in schools and universities through Canada and the United States, and to whom I for one entrust the future of American poetry without misgiving.

B. C.

New Canaan,
Connecticut,
June, 1927.

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In April 661

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

1. *The Yankee Man-of-War*

'TIS of a gallant Yankee ship that flew the stripes and stars,
And the whistling wind from the west-nor'-west blew through the pitch-pine spars;
With her starboard tacks aboard, my boys, she hung upon the gale;
On an autumn night we raised the light on the old Head of Kinsale.

It was a clear and cloudless night, and the wind blew steady and strong,
As gayly over the sparkling deep our good ship bowled along;
With the foaming seas beneath her bow the fiery waves she spread,
And bending low her bosom of snow, she buried her lee cat-head.

There was no talk of short'ning sail by him who walked the poop,
And under the press of her pond'ring jib, the boom bent like a hoop!
And the groaning water-ways told the strain that held her stout main-tack,
But he only laughed as he glanced abaft at a white and silvery track.

The mid-tide meets in the Channel waves that flow from
shore to shore,
And the mist hung heavy upon the land from Feather-
stone to Dunmore,
And that sterling light in Tusker Rock where the old
bell tolls each hour,
And the beacon light that shone so bright was quench'd
on Waterford Tower.

The nightly robes our good ship wore were her whole
topsails three,
Her spanker and her standing jib — the courses being
free,
"Now, lay aloft! my heroes bold, not a moment must
be passed!"
And royals and top-gallant sails were quickly on each mast.

What looms upon our starboard bow? What hangs upon
the breeze?
'Tis time our good ship hauled her wind abreast the old
Saltees,
For by her ponderous press of sail and by her consorts four
We saw our morning visitor was a British man-of-war.

Up spake our noble Captain then, as a shot ahead of us
past —
"Haul snug your flowing courses! lay your topsail to the
mast!"
Those Englishmen gave three loud hurrahs from the deck
of their covered ark,
And we answered back by a solid broadside from the decks
of our patriot bark.

"Out booms! out booms!" our skipper cried, "out booms and give her sheet,"
And the swiftest keel that was ever launched shot ahead of the British fleet,
And amidst a thundering shower of shot, with stun'-sails hoisting away,
Down the North Channel Paul Jones did steer just at the break of day.

PHILIP FRENEAU

1752–1832

2. *The Indian Burying Ground*

IN spite of all the learned have said,
I still my old opinion keep;
The posture, that we give the dead,
Points out the soul's eternal sleep.

Not so the ancients of these lands —
The Indian, when from life released,
Again is seated with his friends,
And shares again the joyous feast.

His imaged birds, and painted bowl,
And venison, for a journey dressed,
Bespeak the nature of the soul,
Activity, that knows no rest.

His bow, for action ready bent,
And arrows, with a head of stone,
Can only mean that life is spent,
And not the old ideas gone.

Thou, stranger, that shalt come this way,
No fraud upon the dead commit —
Observe the swelling turf, and say
They do not lie, but here they sit.

Here still a lofty rock remains,
On which the curious eye may trace
(Now wasted, half, by wearing rains)
The fancies of a ruder race.

Here still an aged elm aspires,
Beneath whose far-projecting shade
(And which the shepherd still admires)
The children of the forest played!

There oft a restless Indian queen
(Pale Shebah, with her braided hair)
And many a barbarous form is seen
To chide the man that lingers there.

By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews;
In habit for the chase arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
The hunter and the deer, a shade!

And long shall timorous fancy see
The painted chief, and pointed spear,
And Reason's self shall bow the knee
To shadows and delusions here.

3.

Retirement

A HERMIT'S house beside a stream,
With forests planted round,
Whatever it to you may seem
More real happiness I deem
Than if I were a monarch crown'd.

A cottage I could call my own,
Remote from domes of care;
A little garden walled with stone,
The wall with ivy overgrown,
A limpid fountain near,

Would more substantial joys afford,
More real bliss impart
Than all the wealth that misers hoard,
Than vanquish'd worlds, or worlds restored —
Mere cankers of the heart!

Vain, foolish man! how vast thy pride,
How little can your wants supply! —
'Tis surely wrong to grasp so wide —
You act as if you only had
To vanquish — not to die!

SAMUEL WOODWORTH

1785–1842

4. *The Bucket*

HOW dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wild-wood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew!
The wide-spreading pond, and the mill that stood by it,
The bridge, and the rock where the cataract fell,
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it,
And e'en the rude bucket that hung in the well —
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket which hung in the well.

That moss-covered vessel I hailed as a treasure,
For often at noon, when returned from the field,
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,
The purest and sweetest that nature can yield.
How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glowing,
And quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell;
Then soon, with the emblem of truth over-flowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well —
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket arose from the well.

How sweet from the green mossy brim to receive it,
As poised on the curb it inclined to my lips!
Not a full blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,
The brightest that beauty or revelry sips.
And now, far removed from the loved habitation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell,

As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket that hangs in the well —
The old-oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket that hangs in the well!

EMMA HART WILLARD

1787–1870

5. *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep*

ROCKED in the cradle of the deep
I lay me down in peace to sleep;
Secure I rest upon the wave,
For thou, O Lord! hast power to save.
I know thou wilt not slight my call,
For Thou dost mark the sparrow's fall;
And calm and peaceful shall I sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.

When in the dead of night I lie
And gaze upon the trackless sky,
The star-bespangled heavenly scroll,
The boundless waters as they roll, —
I feel thy wondrous power to save
From perils of the stormy wave:
Rocked in the cradle of the deep,
I calmly rest and soundly sleep.

And such the trust that still were mine,
Though stormy winds swept o'er the brine,
Or though the tempest's fiery breath
Roused me from sleep to wreck and death.

In ocean cave, still safe with Thee
The germ of immortality!
And calm and peaceful shall I sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.

JOHN PIERPONT

1785–1866

6. *My Child*

I CANNOT make him dead!
His fair sunshiny head
Is ever bounding round my study-chair;
Yet, when my eyes, now dim
With tears, I turn to him,
The vision vanishes — he is not there!

I walk my parlor floor,
And through the open door
I hear a footfall on the chamber stair;
I'm stepping toward the hall
To give the boy a call;
And then bethink me that — he is not there!

I thread the crowded street;
A satchelled lad I meet,
With the same beaming eyes and colored hair:
And, as he's running by,
Follow him with my eye,
Scarcely believing that — he is not there!

I know his face is hid
Under the coffin-lid;
Closed are his eyes; cold his forehead fair;
My hand that marble felt;
O'er it in prayer I knelt;
Yet my heart whispers that — he is not there!

I cannot make him dead!
When passing by the bed,
So long watched over with parental care,
My spirit and my eye
Seek it inquiringly,
Before the thought comes that — he is not there!

When, at the cool, gray break
Of day, from sleep I wake,
With my first breathing of the morning air
My soul goes up with joy,
To Him who gave my boy,
Then comes the sad thought that — he is not there!

When at the day's calm close,
Before we seek repose,
I'm with his mother, offering up our prayer,
Whate'er I may be saying,
I am, in spirit, praying
For our boy's spirit, though — he is not there!

Not there! Where, then, is he?
The form I used to see
Was but the raiment that he used to wear;

The grave that now doth press
Upon that cast-off dress,
Is but his wardrobe locked; — he is not there!

He lives! In all the past
He lives; nor, to the last,
Of seeing him again will I despair;
In dreams I see him now;
And, on his angel brow,
I see it written, "Thou shalt see me there!"

Yes, we all live to God!
Father, thy chastening rod
So help us, thine afflicted ones, to bear,
That in the spirit-land,
Meeting at thy right hand,
'Twill be our heaven to find — that he is there!

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK

1790–1867

7. *Marco Bozzaris*

AT midnight, in his guarded tent,
The Turk was dreaming of the hour
When Greece, her knee in suppliance bent,
Should tremble at his power:
In dreams, through camp and court, he bore
The trophies of a conqueror;
In dreams his song of triumph heard;
Then wore his monarch's signet ring:
Then pressed that monarch's throne — a king;
As wild his thoughts, and gay of wing,
As Eden's garden bird.

At midnight, in the forest shades,
Bozzaris ranged his Suliote band,
True as the steel of their tried blades,
Heroes in heart and hand.
There had the Persian's thousands stood,
There had the glad earth drunk their blood
On old Platæa's day;
And now there breathed that haunted air
The sons of sires who conquered there,
With arm to strike and soul to dare,
As quick, as far as they.

An hour passed on — the Turk awoke;
That bright dream was his last;
He woke — to hear his sentries shriek,
"To arms! they come! the Greek! the Greek!"
He woke — to die midst flame, and smoke,
And shout, and groan, and sabre-stroke,
And death-shots falling thick and fast

As lightnings from the mountain-cloud;
And heard, with voice as trumpet loud,
Bozzaris cheer his band:
"Strike — till the last armed foe expires;
Strike — for your altars and your fires;
Strike — for the green graves of your sires;
God — and your native land!"

They fought — like brave men, long and well;
They piled that ground with Moslem slain,
They conquered — but Bozzaris fell,
Bleeding at every vein.

His few surviving comrades saw
His smile when rang their proud hurrah,
  And the red field was won;
Then saw in death his eyelids close
Calmly, as to a night's repose,
  Like flowers at set of sun.

Come to the bridal-chamber, Death!
  Come to the mother's, when she feels,
For the first time, her first-born's breath;
  Come when the blessed seals
That close the pestilence are broke,
And crowded cities wail its stroke;
Come in consumption's ghastly form,
The earthquake shock, the ocean storm;
Come when the heart beats high and warm
  With banquet-song, and dance, and wine;
And thou art terrible — the tear,
The groan, the knell, the pall, the bier,
And all we know, or dream, or fear
  Of agony are thine.

But to the hero, when his sword
  Has won the battle for the free,
Thy voice sounds like a prophet's word;
And in its hollow tones are heard
  The thanks of millions yet to be.
Come, when his task of fame is wrought —
Come, with her laurel-leaf, blood-bought —
  Come in her crowning hour — and then
Thy sunken eye's unearthly light
To him is welcome as the sight
  Of sky and stars to prisoned men;

Thy grasp is welcome as the hand
Of brother in a foreign land;
Thy summons welcome as the cry
That told the Indian isles were nigh
To the world-seeking Genoese,
When the land wind, from woods of palm,
And orange-groves, and fields of balm,
Blew o'er the Haytian seas.
Bozzaris! with the storied brave
Greece nurtured in her glory's time,
Rest thee — there is no prouder grave,
Even in her own proud clime.
She wore no funeral-weeds for thee,
Nor bade the dark hearse wave its plume
Like torn branch from death's leafless tree
In sorrow's pomp and pageantry,
The heartless luxury of the tomb;
But she remembers thee as one
Long loved and for a season gone;
For thee her poet's lyre is wreathed,
Her marble wrought, her music breathed;
For thee she rings the birthday bells;
Of thee her babe's first lisping tells;
For thine her evening prayer is said
At palace-couch and cottage-bed;
Her soldier, closing with the foe,
Gives for thy sake a deadlier blow;
His plighted maiden, when she fears
For him the joy of her young years,
Thinks of thy fate, and checks her tears;
And she, the mother of thy boys,
Though in her eye and faded cheek

Is read the grief she will not speak,
The memory of her buried joys,
And even she who gave thee birth,
Will, by their pilgrim-circled hearth,
Talk of thy doom without a sigh;
For thou art Freedom's now, and Fame's:
One of the few, the immortal names,
That were not born to die.

8. On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake

GREEN be the turf above thee,
Friend of my better days!
None knew thee but to love thee,
Nor named thee but to praise.

Tears fell when thou wert dying,
From eyes unused to weep,
And long, where thou art lying,
Will tears the cold turf steep.

When hearts, whose truth was proven,
Like thine, are laid in earth,
There should a wreath be woven
To tell the world their worth;

And I who woke each morrow
To clasp thy hand in mine,
Who shared thy joy and sorrow,
Whose weal and woe were thine;

It should be mine to braid it
  Around thy faded brow,
But I've in vain essayed it,
  And feel I cannot now.

While memory bids me weep thee,
  Nor thoughts nor words are free, —
The grief is fixed too deeply
  That mourns a man like thee.

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

1791–1852

9. *Home Sweet Home!*

MID pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.
Home, Home, sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain;
Oh, give me my lowly thatched cottage again!
The birds singing gayly, that came at my call, —
Give me them, — and the peace of mind, dearer than all!
Home, Home, sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

How sweet 'tis to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,
And the cares of a mother to soothe and beguile!

Let others delight 'mid new pleasures to roam,
But give me, oh, give me, the pleasures of home!
  Home, Home, sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

To thee I'll return, overburdened with care;
The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there;
No more from that cottage again will I roam;
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
  Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE

1795–1820

10. *The American Flag*

WHEN Freedom from her mountain height
  Unfurled her standard to the air,
She tore the azure robe of night,
  And set the stars of glory there.
She mingled with its gorgeous dyes
The milky baldric of the skies,
And striped its pure celestial white
With streakings of the morning light;
Then from his mansion in the sun
She called her eagle bearer down,
And gave into his mighty hand
The symbol of her chosen land.

Majestic monarch of the cloud,
  Who rear'st aloft thy regal form,
To hear the tempest trumpings loud

And see the lightning lances driven,
  When strive the warriors of the storm,
And rolls the thunder-drum of heaven,
Child of the sun! to thee 'tis given
  To guard the banner of the free,
To hover in the sulphur smoke,
To ward away the battle stroke,
And bid its blending shine afar,
Like rainbows on the cloud of war,
  The harbingers of victory!
Flag of the brave! thy folds shall fly,
The sign of hope and triumph high,
When speaks the signal trumpet tone,
And the long line comes gleaming on.
Ere yet the life-blood, warm and wet,
Has dimmed the glistening bayonet,

Each soldier eye shall brightly turn
To where thy sky-born glories burn,
And, as his springing steps advance,
Catch war and vengeance from the glance.
And when the cannon-mouthings loud
Heave in wild wreaths the battle shroud,
And gory sabres rise and fall
Like shoots of flame on midnight's pall,
  Then shall thy meteor glances glow,
And cowering foes shall shrink beneath
  Each gallant arm that strikes below
That lovely messenger of death.

Flag of the seas! on ocean wave
Thy stars shall glitter o'er the brave;

When death, careering on the gale,
Sweeps darkly round the bellied sail,
And frighted waves rush wildly back
Before the broadside's reeling rack,
Each dying wanderer of the sea
Shall look at once to heaven and thee,
And smile to see thy splendors fly
In triumph o'er his closing eye.

Flag of the free heart's hope and home!
By angel hands to valor given;
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome,
And all thy hues were born in heaven.
Forever float that standard sheet!
Where breathes the foe but falls before us,
With Freedom's soil beneath our feet,
And Freedom's banner streaming o'er us?

II. *Elfin Song*

OUPHE and goblin! imp and sprite!
Elf of eve! and starry Fay!
Ye that love the moon's soft light,
Hither — hither wend your way;
Twine ye in a jocund ring,
Sing and trip it merrily,
Hand to hand, and wing to wing,
Round the wild witch-hazel tree.

Hail the wanderer again,
With dance and song, and lute and lyre.

Pure his wing and strong his chain,
And doubly bright his fairy fire.
Twine ye in an airy round,
Brush the dew and print the lea;
Skip and gambol, hop and bound,
Round the wild witch-hazel tree.

The beetle guards our holy ground,
He flies about the haunted place,
And if mortal there be found,
He hums in his ears and flaps his face;
The leaf-harp sounds our roundelay,
The owlet's eyes our lanterns be;
Thus we sing, and dance, and play,
Round the wild witch-hazel tree.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

1794–1878

12. *Thanatopsis*

TO him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images

Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart; —
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around —
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air —
Comes a still voice — Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix for ever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world — with kings,
The powerful of the earth — the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun, — the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between;
The venerable woods — rivers that move

In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,
Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste, —
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom. — Take the wings
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,
Save his own dashings — yet the dead are there:
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep — the dead reign there alone.
So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glide away, the sons of men,
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man —
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

13. *A Forest Hymn*

THE groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them — ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amid the cool and silence, he knelt down,
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks
And supplication. For his simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences
Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,
And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thought of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty. Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore
Only among the crowd, and under roofs

That our frail hands have raised? Let me, at least,
Here, in the shadow of this aged wood,
Offer one hymn — thrice happy, if it find
Acceptance in His ear.

Father, thy hand
Hath reared these venerable columns, thou
Didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst look down
Upon the naked earth, and, forthwith, rose
All these fair ranks of trees. They, in thy sun,
Budded, and shook their green leaves in thy breeze,
And shot toward heaven. The century-living crow
Whose birth was in their tops, grew old and died
Among their branches, till, at last, they stood,
As now they stand, massy, and tall, and dark,
Fit shrine for humble worshipper to hold
Communion with his Maker. These dim vaults,
These winding aisles, of human pomp or pride
Report not. No fantastic carvings show
The boast of our vain race to change the form
Of thy fair works. But thou art here — thou fill'st
The solitude. Thou art in the soft winds
That run along the summit of these trees
In music; thou art in the cooler breath
That from the inmost darkness of the place
Comes, scarcely felt; the barky trunks, the ground,
The fresh moist ground, are all instinct with thee.
Here is continual worship; — Nature, here,
In the tranquillity that thou dost love,
Enjoys thy presence. Noiselessly, around,
From perch to perch, the solitary bird
Passes; and yon clear spring, that, midst its herbs,

Wells softly forth and wandering steeps the roots
Of half the mighty forest, tells no tale
Of all the good it does. Thou hast not left
Thyself without a witness, in the shades,
Of thy perfections. Grandeur, strength, and grace
Are here to speak of thee. This mighty oak —
By whose immovable stem I stand and seem
Almost annihilated — not a prince,
In all that proud old world beyond the deep,
E'er wore his crown as loftily as he
Wears the green coronal of leaves with which
Thy hand has graced him. Nestled at his root
Is beauty, such as blooms not in the glare
Of the broad sun. That delicate forest flower,
With scented breath and look so like a smile,
Seems, as it issues from the shapeless mould,
An emanation of the indwelling Life,
A visible token of the upholding Love,
That are the soul of this great universe.

My heart is awed within me when I think
Of the great miracle that still goes on,
In silence, round me — the perpetual work
Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed
Forever. Written on thy works I read
The lesson of thy own eternity.
Lo! all grow old and die — but see again,
How on the faltering footsteps of decay
Youth presses — ever gay and beautiful youth
In all its beautiful forms. These lofty trees
Wave not less proudly that their ancestors
Moulder beneath them. Oh, there is not lost

One of earth's charms: upon her bosom yet,
After the flight of untold centuries,
The freshness of her far beginning lies
And yet shall lie. Life mocks the idle hate
Of his arch-enemy Death — yea, seats himself
Upon the tyrant's throne — the sepulchre,
And of the triumphs of his ghastly foe
Makes his own nourishment. For he came forth
From thine own bosom, and shall have no end.

There have been holy men who hid themselves
Deep in the woody wilderness, and gave
Their lives to thought and prayer, till they outlived
The generation born with them, nor seemed
Less aged than the hoary trees and rocks
Around them; — and there have been holy men
Who deemed it were not well to pass life thus.
But let me often to these solitudes
Retire, and in thy presence reassure
My feeble virtue. Here its enemies,
The passions, at thy plainer footsteps shrink
And tremble and are still. O God! when thou
Dost scare the world with tempests, set on fire
The heavens with falling thunderbolts, or fill,
With all the waters of the firmament,
The swift dark whirlwind that uproots the woods
And drowns the villages; when, at thy call,
Uprises the great deep and throws himself
Upon the continent, and overwhelms
Its cities — who forgets not, at the sight
Of these tremendous tokens of thy power,
His pride, and lays his strifes and follies by?

Oh, from these sterner aspects of thy face
Spare me and mine, nor let us need the wrath
Of the mad unchained elements to teach
Who rules them. Be it ours to meditate,
In these calm shades, thy milder majesty,
And to the beautiful order of thy works
Learn to conform the order of our lives.

14. *To a Waterfowl*

WHITHER, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast —
The desert and illimitable air —
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

15. *To the Fringed Gentian*

THOU blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night.

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue — blue — as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

16. *The Yellow Violet*

WHEN beechen buds begin to swell,
And woods the blue-bird's warble know,
The yellow violet's modest bell
Peeps from the last year's leaves below.

Ere russet fields their green resume,
Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,
To meet thee, when thy faint perfume
Alone is in the virgin air.

Of all her train, the hands of Spring
First plant thee in the watery mould,
And I have seen thee blossoming
Beside the snow-bank's edges cold.

Thy parent sun, who bade thee view
Pale skies, and chilling moisture sip,
Has bathed thee in his own bright hue,
And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.

Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,
And earthward bent thy gentle eye,
Unapt the passing view to meet,
When loftier flowers are flaunting nigh.

Oft, in the sunless April day,
Thy early smile has stayed my walk;
But midst the gorgeous blooms of May,
I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

So they, who climb to wealth, forget
The friends in darker fortunes tried.
I copied them — but I regret
That I should ape the ways of pride.

And when again the genial hour
Awakes the painted tribes of light,
I'll not o'erlook the modest flower
That made the woods of April bright.

17. *"Oh Fairest of the Rural Maids"*

OH fairest of the rural maids!
Thy birth was in the forest shades;
Green boughs, and glimpses of the sky,
Were all that met thine infant eye.

Thy sports, thy wanderings, when a child,
Were ever in the sylvan wild;
And all the beauty of the place
Is in thy heart and on thy face.

The twilight of the trees and rocks
Is in the light shade of thy locks;
Thy step is as the wind, that weaves
Its playful way among the leaves.

Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene
And silent waters heaven is seen;
Their lashes are the herbs that look
On their young figures in the brook.

The forest depths, by foot unpressed,
Are not more sinless than thy breast;
The holy peace, that fills the air
Of those calm solitudes, is there.

18. "*I Broke the Spell that Held Me Long*"

I BROKE the spell that held me long,
The dear, dear witchery of song.
I said, the poet's idle lore
Shall waste my prime of years no more,
For Poetry, though heavenly born,
Consorts with poverty and scorn.

I broke the spell — nor deemed its power
Could fetter me another hour.
Ah, thoughtless! how could I forget
Its causes were around me yet?
For whereso'er I looked, the while,
Was Nature's everlasting smile.

Still came and lingered on my sight
Of flowers and streams the bloom and light,
And glory of the stars and sun; —
And these and poetry are one.
They, ere the world had held me long,
Recalled me to the love of song.

19. *The Death of the Flowers*

THE melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread;
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?

Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;
But on the hills the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sun-flower by the brook in autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone, from upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm mild day, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side.
In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forests cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief:
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.

20. *The Past*

THOU unrelenting Past!
Strong are the barriers round thy dark domain,
And fetters, sure and fast,
Hold all that enter thy unbreathing reign.

Far in thy realm withdrawn,
Old empires sit in sullenness and gloom,
And glorious ages gone
Lie deep within the shadow of thy womb.

Childhood, with all its mirth,
Youth, Manhood, Age that draws us to the ground,
And last, Man's Life on earth,
Glide to thy dim dominions, and are bound.

Thou hast my better years;
Thou hast my earlier friends, the good, the kind,
Yielded to thee with tears —
The venerable form, the exalted mind.

My spirit yearns to bring
The lost ones back — yearns with desire intense,
And struggles hard to wring
Thy bolts apart, and pluck thy captives thence.

In vain; thy gates deny
All passages save to those who hence depart;
Nor to the streaming eye
Thou giv'st them back — nor to the broken heart.

In thy abysses hide
Beauty and excellence unknown; to thee
Earth's wonder and her pride
Are gathered, as the waters to the sea;

Labors of good to man,
Unpublished charity, unbroken faith,
Love, that midst grief began,
And grew with years, and faltered not in death.

Full many a mighty name
Lurks in thy depths, unuttered, unrevered;
With thee are silent fame,
Forgotten arts, and wisdom disappeared.

Thine for a space are they —
Yet shalt thou yield thy treasures up at last,
Thy gates shall yet give way,
Thy bolts shall fall, inexorable Past!

All that of good and fair
Has gone into thy womb from earliest time,
Shall then come forth to wear
The glory and the beauty of its prime.

They have not perished — no!
Kind words, remembered voices once so sweet,
Smiles, radiant long ago,
And features, the great soul's apparent seat,

All shall come back; each tie
Of pure affection shall be knit again;
Alone shall Evil die,
And Sorrow dwell a prisoner in thy reign.

And then shall I behold
Him, by whose kind paternal side I sprung,
And her, who, still and cold,
Fills the next grave — the beautiful and young.

21. *An Evening Revery*

THE summer day is closed — the sun is set:
Well they have done their office, those bright hours,
The latest of whose train goes softly out
In the red west. The green blade of the ground
Has risen, and herds have cropped it; the young twig
Has spread its plaited tissues to the sun;
Flowers of the garden and the waste have blown
And withered; seeds have fallen upon the soil,
From bursting cells, and in their graves await
Their resurrection. Insects from the pools
Have filled the air awhile with humming wings,
That now are stilled for ever; painted moths
Have wandered the blue sky, and died again;
The mother-bird hath broken for her brood

Their prison shell, or shoved them from the nest,
Plumed for their earliest flight. In bright alcoves,
In woodland cottages with barky walls,
In noisome cells of the tumultuous town,
Mothers have clasped with joy the new-born babe.
Graves by the lonely forest, by the shore
Of rivers and of ocean, by the ways
Of the thronged city, have been hollowed out
And filled, and closed. This day hath parted friends
That ne'er before were parted; it hath knit
New friendships; it hath seen the maiden plight
Her faith, and trust her peace to him who long
Had wooed; and it hath heard, from lips which late
Were eloquent of love, the first harsh word,
That told the wedded one her peace was flown.
Farewell to the sweet sunshine! One glad day
Is added now to Childhood's merry days,
And one calm day to those of quiet Age.
Still the fleet hours run on; and as I lean,
Amid the thickening darkness, lamps are lit,
By those who watch the dead, and those who twine
Flowers for the bride. The mother from the eyes
Of her sick infant shades the painful light,
And sadly listens to his quick-drawn breath.

O thou great Movement of the Universe,
Or Change, or Flight of Time — for ye are one!
That bearest, silently, this visible scene
Into night's shadow and the streaming rays
Of starlight, whither art thou bearing me?
I feel the mighty current sweep me on,
Yet know not whither. Man foretells afar

The courses of the stars; the very hour
He knows when they shall darken or grow bright;
Yet doth the eclipse of Sorrow and of Death
Come unforewarned. Who next, of those I love,
Shall pass from life, or, sadder yet, shall fall
From virtue? Strife with foes, or bitterer strife
With friends, or shame and general scorn of men —
Which who can bear? — or the fierce rack of pain —
Lie they within my path? Or shall the years
Push me, with soft and inoffensive pace,
Into the stilly twilight of my age?
Or do the portals of another life
Even now, while I am glorying in my strength,
Impend around me? Oh! beyond that bourne,
In the vast cycle of being which begins
At that dread threshold, with what fairer forms
Shall the great law of change and progress clothe
Its workings? Gently — so have good men taught —
Gently, and without grief, the old shall glide
Into the new; the eternal flow of things,
Like a bright river of the fields of heaven,
Shall journey onward in perpetual peace.

AMOS BRONSON ALCOTT

1799–1888

22. *Emerson*

MISFORTUNE to have lived not knowing thee!
'Twere not high living, nor to noblest end,
Who, dwelling near, learned not sincerity,
Rich friendship's ornament that still doth lend

To life its consequence and propriety.
Thy fellowship was my culture, noble friend:
By the hand thou took'st me, and did'st condescend
To bring me straightway into thy fair guild;
And life-long hath it been high compliment
By that to have been known, and thy friend styled,
Given to rare thought and to good learning bent;
Whilst in my straits an angel on me smiled.
Permit me, then, thus honored, still to be
A scholar in thy university.

23. *Thoreau*

WHO nearest Nature's life would truly come
Must nearest come to him of whom I speak;
He all kinds knew, — the vocal and the dumb;
Masterful in genius was he, and unique,
Patient, sagacious, tender, frolicsome.
This Concord Pan would oft his whistle take,
And forth from wood and fen, field, hill, and lake,
Trooping around him in their several guise,
The shy inhabitants their haunts forsake:
Then he, like Æsop, man would satirize,
Hold up the image wild to clearest view
Of undiscerning manhood's puzzled eyes,
And mocking say, " Lo! mirrors here for you:
Be true as these, if ye would be more wise."

AMOS BRONSON ALCOTT

24. *Garrison*

FREEDOM'S first champion in our fettered land!
Nor politician nor base citizen
Could gibbet thee, nor silence, nor withstand.
Thy trenchant and emancipating pen
The patriot Lincoln snatched with steady hand,
Writing his name and thine on parchment white,
'Midst war's resistless and ensanguined flood;
Then held that proclamation high in sight
Before his fratricidal countrymen, —
" Freedom henceforth throughout the land for all," —
And sealed the instrument with his own blood,
Bowing his mighty strength for slavery's fall;
Whilst thou, stanch friend of largest liberty,
Survived, — its ruin and our peace to see.

EDWARD COATE PINKNEY

1802–1828

25. *A Serenade*

LOOK out upon the stars, my love,
And shame them with thine eyes,
On which, than on the lights above,
There hang more destinies.
Night's beauty is the harmony
Of blending shades and light;
Then, lady, up, — look out, and be
A sister to the night!

Sleep not! thine image wakes for aye
Within my watching breast:
Sleep not! from her soft sleep should fly
Who robs all hearts of rest.
Nay, lady, from thy slumbers break,
And make this darkness gay
With looks, whose brightness well might make
Of darker nights a day.

26. *Votive Song*

I BURN no incense, hang no wreath,
On this thine early tomb:
Such cannot cheer the place of death,
But only mock its gloom.
Here odorous smoke and breathing flower
No grateful influence shed;
They lose their perfume and their power,
When offered to the dead.

And if, as is the Afghan's creed,
The spirit may return,
A disembodied sense to feed,
On fragrance, near its urn, —
It is enough that she, whom thou
Didst love in living years,
Sits desolate beside it now,
And fall these heavy tears.

GEORGE POPE MORRIS

1802–1864

27. *Woodman, Spare That Tree!*

WOODMAN, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
And I'll protect it now.
'Twas my forefather's hand
That placed it near his cot;
There, woodman, let it stand,
Thy axe shall harm it not.

That old familiar tree,
Whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea —
And wouldst thou hew it down?
Woodman, forbear thy stroke!
Cut not its earth-bound ties;
Oh, spare that aged oak
Now towering to the skies!

When but an idle boy,
I sought its grateful shade;
In all their gushing joy
Here, too, my sisters played.
My mother kissed me here;
My father pressed my hand —
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let that old oak stand.

My heart-strings round thee cling,
Close as thy bark, old friend!
Here shall the wild-bird sing,
And still thy branches bend.
Old tree! the storm still brave!
And, woodman, leave the spot;
While I've a hand to save,
Thy axe shall harm it not.

GEORGE LUNT

1803–1885

For One Slain in Battle

28. *Requiem*

BREATHE, trumpets, breathe
Slow notes of saddest wailing, —
Sadly responsive peal, ye muffled drums;
Comrades, with downcast eyes
And banners trailing,
Attend him home, —
The youthful warrior comes.

Upon his shield,
Upon his shield returning,
Borne from the field of honor
Where he fell;
Glory and grief, together clasped
In mourning,
His fame, his fate
With sobs exulting tell.

Wrap round his breast
  The flag his breast defended, —
His country's flag,
  In battle's front unrolled:
For it he died;
  On earth forever ended
His brave young life
  Lives in each sacred fold.

With proud fond tears,
  By tinge of shame untainted,
Bear him, and lay him
  Gently in his grave:
Above the hero write, —
  The young, half-sainted, —
His country asked his life,
  His life he gave!

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

1803–1882

29. *Each and All*

LITTLE thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown
  Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Deems not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;

Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.
All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;
I brought him home, in his nest, at even;
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,
For I did not bring home the river and sky; —
He sang to my ear, — they sang to my eye.
The delicate shells lay on the shore;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam,
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.
The lover watched his graceful maid,
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed,
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage; —
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.
Then I said, 'I covet truth;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;
I leave it behind with the games of youth:'—
As I spoke, beneath my feet

The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity;
Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird; —
Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

30. *The Problem*

I LIKE a church; I like a cowl,
I love a prophet of the soul;
And on my heart monastic aisles
Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles:
Yet not for all his faith can see
Would I that cowlèd churchman be.

Why should the vest on him allure,
Which I could not on me endure?

Not from a vain or shallow thought
His awful Jove young Phidias brought;
Never from lips of cunning fell
The thrilling Delphic oracle;
Out from the heart of nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old;

Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
The litanies of nations came,
Up from the burning core below, —
The canticles of love and woe:
The hand that rounded Peter's dome
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew; —
The conscious stone to beauty grew.

Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
Of leaves, and feathers from her breast?
Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
Painting with morn each annual cell?
Or how the sacred pine-tree adds
To her old leaves new myriads?
Such and so grew these holy piles,
Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.
Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
As the best gem upon her zone,
And Morning opes with haste her lids
To gaze upon the Pyramids;
O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,
As on its friends, with kindred eye;
For out of Thought's interior sphere
These wonders rose to upper air;
And Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.

These temples grew as grows the grass;
Art might obey, but not surpass.
The passive Master lent his hand
To the vast soul that o'er him planned;
And the same power that reared the shrine
Bestrode the tribes that knelt within.
Ever the fiery Pentecost
Girds with one flame the countless host,
Trances the heart through chanting choirs,
And through the priest the mind inspires.
The word unto the prophet spoken
Was writ on tables yet unbroken;
The word by seers or sibyls told,
In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.
One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost.
I know what say the fathers wise, —
The Book itself before me lies,
Old *Chrysostom*, best Augustine,
And he who blent both in his line,
The younger *Golden Lips* or mines,
Taylor, the Shakespeare of divines.
His words are music in my ear,
I see his cowlèd portrait dear;
And yet, for all his faith could see,
I would not the good bishop be.

31. *Good-bye*

GOOD–BYE, proud world! I'm going home:
Thou are not my friend, and I'm not thine.
Long through thy weary crowds I roam;
A river-ark on the ocean brine,
Long I've been tossed like the driven foam;
But now, proud world! I'm going home.
Good-bye to Flattery's fawning face;
To Grandeur with his wise grimace;
To upstart Wealth's averted eye;
To supple Office, low and high;
To crowded halls, to court and street;
To frozen hearts and hasting feet;
To those who go, and those who come;
Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home.

I am going to my own hearth-stone,
Bosomed in yon green hills alone, —
A secret nook in a pleasant land,
Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;
Where arches green, the livelong day,
Echo the blackbird's roundelay,
And vulgar feet have never trod
A spot that is sacred to thought and God.

O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools and the learned clan;
For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?

32. *The Rhodora*

On being asked, whence is the Flower?

IN May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

33. *The Humble-Bee*

BURLEY, dozing humble-bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.
Let them sail for Porto Rique,
Far-off heats through seas to seek;
I will follow thee alone,
Thou animated torrid-zone!
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
Let me chase thy waving lines;
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun,
Joy of thy dominion!
Sailor of the atmosphere;
Swimmer through the waves of air;
Voyager of light and noon;
Epicurean of June;
Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum, —
All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days,
With a net of shining haze
Silvers the horizon wall,
And with softness touching all,
Tints the human countenance
With a color of romance,

And infusing subtle heats,
Turns the sod to violets,
Thou, in sunny solitudes,
Rover of the underwoods,
The green silence dost displace
With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
In Indian wildernesses found;
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen;
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple-sap and daffodels,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern and agrimony,
Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue
And brier-roses, dwelt among;
All beside was unknown waste,
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher!
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.
When the fierce northwestern blast
Cools sea and land so far and fast,
Thou already slumberest deep;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

34. *The Snow-Storm*

ANNOUNCED by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,

And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and at the gate
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

35. *Sea-Shore*

I HEARD or seemed to hear the chiding Sea
Say, Pilgrim, why so late and slow to come?
Am I not always here, thy summer home?
Is not my voice thy music, morn and eve?

My breath thy healthful climate in the heats,
My touch thy antidote, my bay thy bath?
Was ever building like my terraces?
Was ever couch magnificent as mine?
Lie on the warm rock-ledges, and there learn
A little hut suffices like a town.
I make your sculptured architecture vain,
Vain beside mine. I drive my wedges home,
And carve the coastwise mountain into caves.
Lo! here is Rome and Nineveh and Thebes,
Karnak and Pyramid and Giant's Stairs
Half piled or prostrate; and my newest slab
Older than all thy race.

Behold the Sea,
The opaline, the plentiful and strong,
Yet beautiful as is the rose in June,
Fresh as the trickling rainbow of July;
Sea full of food, the nourisher of kinds,
Purger of earth, and medicine of men;
Creating a sweet climate by my breath,
Washing out harms and griefs from memory,
And, in my mathematic ebb and flow,
Giving a hint of that which changes not.

Rich are the sea-gods: — who gives gifts but they?
They grope the sea for pearls, but more than pearls:
They pluck Force thence, and give it to the wise.
For every wave is wealth to Dædalus,
Wealth to the cunning artist who can work
This matchless strength. Where shall he find, O waves!
A load your Atlas shoulders cannot lift?

I with my hammer pounding evermore
The rocky coast, smite Andes into dust,
Strewing my bed, and, in another age,
Rebuild a continent of better men.
Then I unbar the doors: my paths lead out
The exodus of nations: I disperse
Men to all shores that front the hoary main.

I too have arts and sorceries;
Illusion dwells forever with the wave.
I know what spells are laid. Leave me to deal
With credulous and imaginative man;
For, though he scoop my water in his palm,
A few rods off he deems it gems and clouds.
Planting strange fruits and sunshine on the shore,
I make some coast alluring, some lone isle,
To distant men, who must go there, or die.

36. *Two Rivers*

THY summer voice, Musketaquit,
Repeats the music of the rain;
But sweeter rivers pulsing flit
Through thee, as thou through Concord Plain.

Thou in thy narrow banks art pent:
The stream I love unbounded goes
Through flood and sea and firmament;
Through light, through life, it forward flows.

I see the inundation sweet,
I hear the spending of the stream
Through years, through men, through nature fleet,
Through love and thought, through power and dream.

Musketaquit, a goblin strong,
Of shard and flint makes jewels gay;
They lose their grief who hear his song,
And where he winds is the day of day.

So forth and brighter fares my stream, —
Who drink it shall not thirst again;
No darkness stains its equal gleam,
And ages drop in it like rain.

37. *From Woodnotes*

FOR Nature ever faithful is
To such as trust her faithfulness.
When the forest shall mislead me,
When the night and morning lie,
When sea and land refuse to feed me,
'Twill be time enough to die;
Then will yet my mother yield
A pillow in her greenest field,
Nor the June flowers scorn to cover
The clay of their departed lover.

38. *From "Monadnoc"*

THOUSAND minstrels woke within me,
"Our music's in the hills;" —
Gayest pictures rose to win me,
Leopard-colored rills.
"Up! — If thou knew'st who calls
To twilight parks of beech and pine,
High over the river intervals,
Above the ploughman's highest line,
Over the owner's farthest walls!
Up! where the airy citadel
O'erlooks the surging landscape's swell!
Let not unto the stones the Day
Her lily and rose, her sea and land display.
Read the celestial sign!
Lo! the south answers to the north;
Bookworm, break this sloth urbane;
A greater spirit bids thee forth
Than the gray dreams which thee detain.
Mark how the climbing Oreads
Beckon thee to their arcades;
Youth, for a moment free as they,
Teach thy feet to feel the ground,
Ere yet arrives the wintry day
When Time thy feet has bound.
Take the bounty of thy birth,
Taste the lordship of the earth."

I heard, and I obeyed, —
Assured that he who made the claim,
Well known, but loving not a name,
Was not to be gainsaid.

39. *Forerunners*

LONG I followed happy guides,
I could never reach their sides;
Their step is forth, and, ere the day,
Breaks up their leaguer, and away.
Keen my sense, my heart was young,
Right good-will my sinews strung,
But no speed of mine avails
To hunt upon their shining trails.
On and away, their hastening feet
Make the morning proud and sweet;
Flowers they strew, — I catch the scent;
Or tone of silver instrument
Leaves on the wind melodious trace;
Yet I could never see their face.
On eastern hills I see their smokes,
Mixed with mist by distant lochs.
I met many travellers
Who the road had surely kept;
They saw not my fine revellers, —
These had crossed them while they slept.
Some had heard their fair report,
In the country or the court.
Fleetest couriers alive
Never yet could once arrive,
As they went or they returned,
At the house where these sojourned.
Sometimes their strong speed they slacken,
Though they are not overtaken;
In sleep their jubilant troop is near, —
I tuneful voices overhear;

It may be in wood or waste, —
At unawares 'tis come and past.
Their near camp my spirit knows
By signs gracious as rainbows.
I thenceforward and long after,
Listen for their harp-like laughter,
And carry in my heart, for days,
Peace that hallows rudest ways.

40. *The Apology*

THINK me not unkind and rude
That I walk alone in grove and glen;
I go to the god of the wood
To fetch his word to men.

Tax not my sloth that I
Fold my arms beside the brook;
Each cloud that floated in the sky
Writes a letter in my book.

Chide me not, laborious band,
For the idle flowers I brought;
Every aster in my hand
Goes home loaded with a thought.

There was never mystery
But 'tis figured in the flowers;
Was never secret history
But birds tell it in the bowers.

One harvest from thy field
Homeward brought the oxen strong;
A second crop thine acres yield,
Which I gather in a song.

41. *Dirge*

KNOWS he who tills this lonely field
To reap its scanty corn,
What mystic fruit his acres yield
At midnight and at morn?

In the long sunny afternoon
The plain was full of ghosts;
I wandered up, I wandered down,
Beset by pensive hosts.

The winding Concord gleamed below,
Pouring as wide a flood
As when my brothers, long ago,
Came with me to the wood.

But they are gone, — the holy ones
Who trod with me this lovely vale;
The strong, star-bright companions
Are silent, low and pale.

My good, my noble, in their prime,
Who made this world the feast it was,
Who learned with me the lore of time,
Who loved this dwelling-place!

They took this valley for their toy,
  They played with it in every mood;
A cell for prayer, a hall for joy, —
  They treated nature as they would.

They colored the horizon round;
  Stars flamed and faded as they bade,
All echoes hearkened for their sound, —
  They made the woodlands glad or mad.

I touch this flower of silken leaf,
  Which once our childhood knew;
Its soft leaves wound me with a grief
  Whose balsam never grew.

Hearken to yon pine-warbler
  Singing aloft in the tree!
Hearest thou, O traveller,
  What he singeth to me?

Not unless God made sharp thine ear
  With sorrow such as mine,
Out of that delicate lay could'st thou
  Its heavy tale divine.

"Go, lonely man," it saith;
  "They loved thee from their birth;
Their hands were pure, and pure their faith, —
  There are no such hearts on earth.

"Ye drew one mother's milk,
  One chamber held ye all;
A very tender history
  Did in your childhood fall.

"You cannot unlock your heart,
The key is gone with them;
The silent organ loudest chants
The master's requiem."

42. *Brahma*

IF the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

43. *Days*

DAUGHTERS of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

44. *Waldeinsamkeit*

I DO not count the hours I spend
In wandering by the sea;
The forest is my loyal friend,
Like God it useth me.

In plains that room for shadows make
Of skirting hills to lie,
Bound in by streams which give and take
Their colors from the sky;

Or on the mountain-crest sublime,
Or down the oaken glade,
O what have I to do with time?
For this the day was made.

Cities of mortals woe-begone
Fantastic care derides,
But in the serious landscape lone
Stern benefit abides.

Sheen will tarnish, honey cloy,
And merry is only a mask of sad,
But, sober on a fund of joy,
The woods at heart are glad.

There the great Planter plants
Of fruitful worlds the grain,
And with a million spells enchants
The souls that walk in pain.

Still on the seeds of all he made
The rose of beauty burns;
Through times that wear and forms that fade,
Immortal youth returns.

The black ducks mounting from the lake,
The pigeon in the pines,
The bittern's boom, a desert make
Which no false art refines.

Down in yon watery nook,
Where bearded mists divide,
The gray old gods whom Chaos knew,
The sires of Nature, hide.

Aloft, in secret veins of air,
Blows the sweet breath of song,

O, few to scale those uplands dare,
Though they to all belong!

See thou bring not to field or stone
The fancies found in books;
Leave authors' eyes, and fetch your own,
To brave the landscape's looks.

Oblivion here thy wisdom is,
Thy thrift, the sleep of cares;
For a proud idleness like this
Crowns all thy mean affairs.

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS

1806–1870

45. *The Lost Pleiad*

NOT in the sky,
Where it was seen
So long in eminence of light serene, —
Nor on the white tops of the glistering wave,
Nor down in mansions of the hidden deep,
Though beautiful in green
And crystal, its great caves of mystery, —
Shall the bright watcher have
Her place, and, as of old, high station keep!

Gone! gone!
Oh! nevermore, to cheer
The mariner, who holds his course alone
On the Atlantic, through the weary night,

When the stars turn to watchers, and do sleep,
Shall it again appear,
With the sweet-loving certainty of light,
Down shining on the shut eyes of the deep!

The upward-looking shepherd on the hills
Of Chaldea, night-returning with his flocks,
He wonders why his beauty doth not blaze,
Gladding his gaze, —
And, from his dreary watch along the rocks,
Guiding him homeward o'er the perilous ways!
How stands he waiting still, in a sad maze,
Much wondering, while the drowsy silence fills
The sorrowful vault! — how lingers, in the hope that night
May yet renew the expected and sweet light,
So natural to his sight!

And lone,
Where, at the first, in smiling love she shone,
Brood the once happy circle of bright stars.
How should they dream, until her fate was known,
That they were ever confiscate to death?
That dark oblivion the pure beauty mars,
And, like the earth, its common bloom and breath,
That they should fall from high;
Their lights grow blasted by a touch, and die,
All their concerted springs of harmony
Snapt rudely, and the generous music gone!

Ah! still the strain
Of wailing sweetness fills the saddening sky;
The sister stars, lamenting in their pain
That one of the selectest ones must die, —

Must vanish, when most lovely, from the rest!
Alas! 'tis ever thus the destiny.
Even Rapture's song hath evermore a tone
Of wailing, as for bliss too quickly gone.
The hope most precious is the soonest lost,
The flower most sweet is first to feel the frost.
Are not all short-lived things the loveliest?
And, like the pale star, shooting down the sky,
Look they not ever brightest, as they fly
From the lone sphere they blest!

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

1807–1882

46. *Evangeline*

THIS is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the huntsman?

Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers, —
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever departed!
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o'er the ocean.
Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,
List to the mournful tradition, still sung by the pines of the forest;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.

In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin of Minas,
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand Pré
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to the eastward,
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks without number.

Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with labor incessant
Shut out the turbulent tides; but at stated seasons the flood-gates
Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will o'er the meadows.
West and south there were fields of flax, and orchards and cornfields
Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain; and away to the northward
Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on the mountains
Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the mighty Atlantic
Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their station descended.
There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the Acadian village.
Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak and of hemlock,
Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the reign of the Henries.
Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-windows; and gables projecting
Over the basement below protected and shaded the doorway.
There in the tranquil evenings of summer, when brightly the sunset
Lighted the village street, and gilded the vanes on the chimneys,
Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps and in kirtles

Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs spinning the golden
Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles within doors
Mingled their sounds with the whir of the wheels and the songs of the maidens.
Solemnly down the street came the parish priest, and the children
Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended to bless them.
Reverend walked he among them; and up rose matrons and maidens,
Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate welcome.
Then came the laborers home from the field, and serenely the sun sank
Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon from the belfry
Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of the village
Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense ascending,
Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and contentment.
Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian farmers, —
Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike were they free from
Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the vice of republics.
Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to their windows;

But their dwellings were open as day and the hearts of the owners;
There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and nearer the Basin of Minas,
Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of Grand Pré,
Dwelt on his goodly acres; and with him, directing his household,
Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride of the village.
Stalwart and stately in form was the man of seventy winters;
Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered with snowflakes;
White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks as brown as the oak-leaves.
Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers.
Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on the thorn by the wayside,
Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the brown shade of her tresses!
Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that feed in the meadows.
When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers at noontide
Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in sooth was the maiden.
Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the bell from its turret

Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest with his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings upon them,
Down the long street she passed, with her chaplet of beads and her missal,
Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle of blue, and the ear-rings,
Brought in the olden time from France, and since, as an heirloom,
Handed down from mother to child, through long generations.
But a celestial brightness — a more ethereal beauty —
Shone on her face and encircled her form, when, after confession,
Homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction upon her.
When she had passed, it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music.

Introduction

47. *The Song of Hiawatha*

SHOULD you ask me, whence these stories?
Whence these legends and traditions,
With the odors of the forest,
With the dew and damp of meadows,
With the curling smoke of wigwams,
With the rushing of great rivers,
With their frequent repetitions,
And their wild reverberations,

As of thunder in the mountains?
I should answer, I should tell you,
"From the forests and the prairies,
From the great lakes of the Northland,
From the land of the Ojibways,
From the land of the Dacotahs,
From the mountains, moors, and fen-lands
Where the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
Feeds among the reeds and rushes.
I repeat them as I heard them
From the lips of Nawadaha,
The musician, the sweet singer."
Should you ask where Nawadaha
Found these songs so wild and wayward,
Found these legends and traditions,
I should answer, I should tell you,
"In the bird's-nests of the forest,
In the lodges of the beaver,
In the hoof-prints of the bison,
In the eyry of the eagle!
"All the wild-fowl sang them to him,
In the moorlands and the fen-lands,
In the melancholy marshes;
Chetowaik, the plover, sang them,
Mahng, the loon, the wild-goose, Wawa,
The blue heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
And the grouse, the Mushkodasa!"
If still further you should ask me,
Saying, "Who was Nawadaha?
Tell us of this Nawadaha,"
I should answer your inquiries
Straightway in such words as follow.

" In the vale of Tawasentha,
In the green and silent valley,
By the pleasant water-courses,
Dwelt the singer Nawadaha.
Round about the Indian village
Spread the meadows and the cornfields,
And beyond them stood the forest,
Stood the groves of singing pinetrees,
Green in Summer, white in Winter,
Ever sighing, ever singing.

" And the pleasant water-courses,
You could trace them through the valley,
By the rushing in the Spring-time,
By the alders in the Summer,
By the white fog in the Autumn,
By the black line in the Winter;
And beside them dwelt the singer,
In the vale of Tawasentha,
In the green and silent valley.

" There he sang of Hiawatha,
Sang the Song of Hiawatha,
Sang his wondrous birth and being,
How he prayed and how he fasted,
How he lived, and toiled, and suffered,
That the tribes of men might prosper,
That he might advance his people! "

Ye who love the haunts of Nature,
Love the sunshine of the meadow,
Love the shadow of the forest,
Love the wind among the branches,
And the rain-shower and the snowstorm,
And the rushing of great rivers

Through their palisades of pinetrees,
And the thunder in the mountains,
Whose innumerable echoes
Flap like eagles in their eyries; —
Listen to these wild traditions,
To this Song of Hiawatha!

Ye who love a nation's legends,
Love the ballads of a people,
That like voices from afar off
Call to us to pause and listen,
Speak in tones so plain and childlike,
Scarcely can the ear distinguish
Whether they are sung or spoken; —
Listen to this Indian Legend,
To this Song of Hiawatha!

Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened; —
Listen to this simple story,
To this Song of Hiawatha!

Ye, who sometimes, in your rambles
Through the green lanes of the country,
Where the tangled barberry-bushes
Hang their tufts of crimson berries

Over stone walls gray with mosses,
Pause by some neglected graveyard,
For a while to muse, and ponder
On a half effaced inscription,
Written with little skill of song-craft,
Homely phrases, but each letter
Full of hope and yet of heart-break,
Full of all the tender pathos
Of the Here and the Hereafter; —
Stay and read this rude inscription,
Read this Song of Hiawatha!

48. *Hermes Trismegistus*

As Seleucus narrates, Hermes describes the principles that rank as wholes in two myriads of books; or, as we are informed by Manetho, he perfectly unfolded these principles in three myriads six thousand five hundred and twenty-five volumes. . . .

. . . Our ancestors dedicated the inventions of their wisdom to this deity, inscribing all their own writings with the name of Hermes. — IAMBLICUS.

STILL through Egypt's desert places
Flows the lordly Nile,
From its banks the great stone faces
Gaze with patient smile.
Still the pyramids imperious
Pierce the cloudless skies,
And the Sphinx stares with mysterious,
Solemn, stony eyes.

But where are the old Egyptian
Demi-gods and kings?
Nothing left but an inscription
Graven on stones and rings.
Where are Helios and Hephæstus,
Gods of eldest eld?
Where is Hermes Trismegistus,
Who their secrets held?

Where are now the many hundred
Thousand books he wrote?
By the Thaumaturgists plundered,
Lost in lands remote;
In oblivion sunk forever
As when o'er the land
Blows a storm-wind, in the river
Sinks the scattered sand.

Something unsubstantial, ghostly,
Seems this Theurgist,
In deep meditation mostly
Wrapped, as in a mist.
Vague, phantasmal, and unreal
To our thought he seems,
Walking in a world ideal,
In a land of dreams.

Was he one, or many, merging
Name and fame in one,
Like a stream, to which, converging,
Many streamlets run?

Till, with gathered power proceeding,
Ampler sweep it takes,
Downward the sweet waters leading
From unnumbered lakes.

By the Nile I see him wandering,
Pausing now and then,
On the mystic union pondering
Between gods and men;
Half believing, wholly feeling,
With supreme delight,
How the gods, themselves concealing,
Lift men to their height.

Or in Thebes, the hundred-gated,
In the thoroughfare
Breathing, as if consecrated,
A diviner air;
And amid discordant noises,
In the jostling throng,
Hearing far, celestial voices
Of Olympian song.

Who shall call his dreams fallacious?
Who has searched or sought
All the unexplored and spacious
Universe of thought?
Who, in his own skill confiding,
Shall with rule and line
Mark the border-land dividing
Human and divine?

Trismegistus! three times greatest!
How thy name sublime
Has descended to this latest
Progeny of time!
Happy they whose written pages
Perish with their lives,
If amid the crumbling ages
Still their name survives!

Thine, O priest of Egypt, lately
Found I in the vast,
Weed-encumbered, sombre, stately,
Grave-yard of the Past;
And a presence moved before me
On that gloomy shore,
As a waft of wind, that o'er me
Breathed, and was no more.

49. *The Chamber Over the Gate*

IS it so far from thee
Thou canst no longer see,
In the Chamber over the Gate,
That old man desolate,
Weeping and wailing sore
For his son, who is no more?
O Absalom, my son!

Is it so long ago
That cry of human woe
From the walled city came,
Calling on his dear name,

That it has died away
In the distance of today?
O Absalom, my son!

There is no far or near,
There is neither there nor here,
There is neither soon nor late,
In that Chamber over the Gate,
Nor any long ago
To that cry of human woe,
O Absalom, my son!

From the ages that are past
The voice sounds like a blast,
Over seas that wreck and drown,
Over tumult of traffic and town;
And from ages yet to be
Come the echoes back to me,
O Absalom, my son!

Somewhere at every hour
The watchman on the tower
Looks forth, and sees the fleet
Approach of the hurrying feet
Of messengers, that bear
The tidings of despair.
O Absalom, my son!

He goes forth from the door,
Who shall return no more.
With him our joy departs;
The light goes out in our hearts;

In the Chamber over the Gate
We sit disconsolate.
O Absalom, my son!

That 'tis a common grief
Bringeth but slight relief;
Ours is the bitterest loss,
Ours is the heaviest cross;
And forever the cry will be
"Would God I had died for thee,
O Absalom, my son!"

50. *A Dutch Picture*

SIMON DANZ has come home again,
From cruising about with his buccaneers;
He has singed the beard of the King of Spain
And carried away the Dean of Jaen
And sold him in Algiers.

In his house by the Maese, with its roof of tiles,
And weathercocks flying aloft in air,
There are silver tankards of antique styles,
Plunder of convent and castle, and piles
Of carpets rich and rare.

In his tulip-garden there by the town,
Overlooking the sluggish stream,
With his Moorish cap and dressing-gown,
The old sea-captain, hale and brown,
Walks in a waking dream.

A smile in his gray mustachio lurks
  Whenever he thinks of the King of Spain,
And the listed tulips look like Turks,
And the silent gardener as he works
  Is changed to the Dean of Jaen.

The windmills on the outermost
  Verge of the landscape in the haze,
To him are towers on the Spanish coast,
With whiskered sentinels at their post,
  Though this is the river Maese.

But when the winter rains begin,
  He sits and smokes by the blazing brands,
And old seafaring men come in,
Goat-bearded, gray, and with double chin,
  And rings upon their hands.

They sit there in the shadow and shine
  Of the flickering fire of the winter night;
Figures in color and design
Like those by Rembrandt of the Rhine,
  Half darkness and half light.

And they talk of ventures lost or won,
  And their talk is ever and ever the same,
While they drink the red wine of Tarragon,
From the cellars of some Spanish Don,
  Or convent set on flame.

Restless at times with heavy strides
  He paces his parlor to and fro;

He is like a ship that at anchor rides,
And swings with the rising and falling tides,
And tugs at her anchor-tow.

Voices mysterious far and near,
Sound of the wind and sound of the sea,
Are calling and whispering in his ear,
"Simon Danz! Why stayest thou here?
Come forth and follow me!"

So he thinks he shall take to the sea again
For one more cruise with his buccaneers,
To singe the beard of the King of Spain,
And capture another Dean of Jaen
And sell him in Algiers.

51. *St. John's, Cambridge*

I STAND beneath the tree, whose branches shade
Thy western window, Chapel of St. John!
And hear its leaves repeat their benison
On him, whose hand thy stones memorial laid;
Then I remember one of whom was said
In the world's darkest hour, "Behold thy son!"
And see him living still, and wandering on
And waiting for the advent long delayed.
Not only tongues of the apostles teach
Lessons of love and light, but these expanding

And sheltering boughs with all their leaves implore,
And say in language clear as human speech,
"The peace of God, that passeth understanding,
Be and abide with you forevermore!"

52. *Nature*

AS a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

53. *Chimes*

SWEET chimes! that in the loneliness of night
Salute the passing hour, and in the dark
And silent chambers of the household mark
The movements of the myriad orbs of light!

Through my closed eyelids, by the inner sight,
I see the constellations in the arc
Of their great circles moving on, and hark!
I almost hear them singing in their flight.
Better than sleep it is to lie awake,
O'er-canopied by the vast starry dome
Of the immeasurable sky; to feel
The slumbering world sink under us, and make
Hardly an eddy, — a mere rush of foam
On the great sea beneath a sinking keel.

54. *The Sound of the Sea*

THE sea awoke at midnight from its sleep,
And round the pebbly beaches far and wide
I heard the first wave of the rising tide
Rush onward with uninterrupted sweep;
A voice out of the silence of the deep,
A sound mysteriously multiplied
As of a cataract from the mountain's side,
Or roar of winds upon a wooded steep.
So comes to us at times, from the unknown
And inaccessible solitudes of being,
The rushing of the sea-tides of the soul;
And inspirations, that we deem our own,
Are some divine foreshadowing and foreseeing
Of things beyond our reason or control.

55. *Chaucer*

AN old man in a lodge within a park;
The chamber walls depicted all around
With portraitures of huntsman, hawk, and hound,
And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,
Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;
He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
Then writeth in a book like any clerk.
He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
Made beautiful with song; and as I read
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead.

56. *Divina Commedia*

I

OFT have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,

Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
The air is filled with some unknown perfume;
The congregation of the dead make room
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.

From the confessionals I hear arise
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
And lamentations from the crypts below;
And then a voice celestial that begins
With the pathetic words, "Although your sins
As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

IV

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,
She stands before thee, who so long ago
Filled thy young heart with passion and the woe
From which thy song and all its splendors came;
And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy name,
The ice about thy heart melts as the snow
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.
Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,
As of the dawn on some dark forest cast,
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;
Lethe and Eunoë — the remembered dream
And the forgotten sorrow — bring at last
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

V

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
With forms of Saints and holy men who died,
Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
With splendor upon splendor multiplied;
And Beatrice again at Dante's side
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.

And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;
And the melodious bells among the spires
O'er all the house-tops and through heaven above
Proclaim the elevation of the Host!

VI

O star of morning and of liberty!
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
Above the darkness of the Apennines,
Forerunner of the day that is to be!
The voices of the city and the sea,
The voices of the mountains and the pines,
Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!
Thy flame is blown abroad from all the heights,
Through all the nations, and a sound is heard,
As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,
In their own language hear thy wondrous word,
And many are amazed and many doubt.

57. *Sandalphon*

HAVE you read in the Talmud of old,
In the Legends the Rabbins have told
Of the limitless realms of the air,
Have you read it, — the marvellous story
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

How, erect, at the outermost gates
Of the City Celestial he waits,
With his feet on the ladder of light,
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered
Alone in the desert at night?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire
Chant only one hymn, and expire
With the song's irresistible stress;
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harp-strings are broken asunder
By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,
Unmoved by the rush of the song,
With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels, the deathless
Sandalphon stands listening breathless
To sounds that ascend from below; —

From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
In the fervor and passion of prayer;
From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
Into garlands of purple and red;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the City Immortal
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know, —
A fable, a phantom, a show,
Of the ancient Rabbinical lore;
Yet the old mediæval tradition,
The beautiful, strange superstition,
But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,
And the welkin above is all white,
All throbbing and panting with stars,
Among them majestic is standing
Sandalphon the angel, expanding
His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,
The frenzy and fire of the brain,
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
To quiet its fever and pain.

58. *The Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz*

May 28, 1857

IT was fifty years ago.
In the pleasant month of May,
In the beautiful Pays de Vaud,
A child in its cradle lay.

And Nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying: " Here is a story-book
Thy Father has written for thee."

"Come, wander with me," she said,
"Into regions yet untrod;
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God."

And he wandered away and away
With Nature, the dear old nurse,
Who sang to him night and day
The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,
Or his heart began to fail,
She would sing a more wonderful song,
Or tell a more marvellous tale.

So she keeps him still a child,
And will not let him go,
Though at times his heart beats wild
For the beautiful Pays de Vaud;

Though at times he hears in his dreams
The Ranz des Vaches of old,
And the rush of mountain streams
From glaciers clear and cold;

And the mother at home says, "Hark!
For his voice I listen and yearn;
It is growing late and dark,
And my boy does not return!"

59. *My Lost Youth*

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.
And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the ships,
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,

That in part are prophecies, and in part
  Are longings wild and vain.
    And the voice of that fitful song
    Sings on, and is never still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;
  There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
  And a mist before the eye.
    And the words of that fatal song
    Come over me like a chill:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
  When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
  As they balance up and down,
    Are singing the beautiful song,
    Are sighing and whispering still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
  And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
  I find my lost youth again.

And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

60. *Hymn to the Night*

I HEARD the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there, —
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,
The best-beloved Night!

61. *The Arrow and the Song*

I SHOT an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

62. *Paul Revere's Ride*

LISTEN, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town tonight,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.
Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made

Masses and moving shapes of shade, —
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay, —
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,

As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a stream of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock,
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled, —
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm, —

A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

1807–1892

63. *Proem*

I LOVE the old melodious lays
Which soften melt the ages through,
The songs of Spenser's golden days,
Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew.

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
To breathe their marvellous notes I try;
I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
In silence feel the dewy showers,
And drink with glad, still lips the blessing of the sky.

The rigor of a frozen clime,
The harshness of an untaught ear,
The jarring words of one whose rhyme
Beat often Labor's hurried time,
Or Duty's rugged march through storm and strife, are here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature's face,
I view her common forms with unanointed eyes.

Nor mine the seer-like power to show
The secrets of the heart and mind;
To drop the plummet-line below
Our common world of joy and woe,
A more intense despair or brighter hope to find.

Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own.

O freedom! if to me belong
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
Still with a love as deep and strong
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on thy shrine!

64. *The Barefoot Boy*

BLESSINGS on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;

With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;
From my heart I give thee joy, —
I was once a barefoot boy!
Prince thou art, — the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye, —
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild-flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,

And the architectural plans
Of gray hornet artisans!
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy, —
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too;
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

Oh for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread;
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch: pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can!
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat:
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil:
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;

Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

65. *Maud Muller*

MAUD MULLER on a summer's day
Raked the meadow sweet with hay.

Beneath her torn hat glowed the wealth
Of simple beauty and rustic health.

Singing, she wrought, and her merry glee
The mock-bird echoed from his tree.

But when she glanced to the far-off town,
White from its hill-slope looking down,

The sweet song died, and a vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast, —

A wish that she hardly dared to own,
For something better than she had known.

The Judge rode slowly down the lane,
Smoothing his horse's chestnut mane.

He drew his bridle in the shade
Of the apple-trees, to greet the maid,

And asked a draught from the spring that flowed
Through the meadow across the road.

She stooped where the cool spring bubbled up,
And filled for him her small tin cup,

And blushed as she gave it, looking down
On her feet so bare, and her tattered gown.

"Thanks!" said the Judge; "a sweeter draught
From a fairer hand was never quaffed."

He spoke of the grass and flowers and trees,
Of the singing birds and the humming bees;

Then talked of the haying, and wondered whether
The cloud in the west would bring foul weather,

And Maud forgot her brier-torn gown,
And her graceful ankles bare and brown;

And listened, while a pleased surprise
Looked from her long-lashed hazel eyes.

At last, like one who for delay
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away.

Maud Muller looked and sighed: "Ah me!
That I the Judge's bride might be!

"He would dress me up in silks so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine.

"My father should wear a broadcloth coat;
My brother should sail a painted boat.

"I'd dress my mother so grand and gay,
And the baby should have a new toy each day.

"And I'd feed the hungry and clothe the poor,
And all should bless me who left our door."

The Judge looked back as he climbed the hill,
And saw Maud Muller standing still.

"A form more fair, a face more sweet,
Ne'er hath it been my lot to meet.

"And her modest answer and graceful air
Show her wise and good as she is fair.

"Would she were mine, and I to-day,
Like her, a harvester of hay;

"No doubtful balance of rights and wrongs,
Nor weary lawyers with endless tongues,

"But low of cattle and song of birds,
And health and quiet and loving words."

But he thought of his sisters, proud and cold,
And his mother, vain of her rank and gold.

So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on,
And Maud was left in the field alone.

But the lawyers smiled that afternoon,
When he hummed in court an old love-tune;

And the young girl mused beside the well
Till the rain on the unraked clover fell.

He wedded a wife of richest dower,
Who lived for fashion, as he for power.

Yet oft, in his marble hearth's bright glow,
He watched a picture come and go;

And sweet Maud Muller's hazel eyes
Looked out in their innocent surprise.

Oft, when the wine in his glass was red,
He longed for the wayside well instead;

And closed his eyes on his garnished rooms
To dream of meadows and clover-blooms.

And the proud man sighed, with a secret pain,
"Ah, that I were free again!

"Free as when I rode that day,
Where the barefoot maiden raked her hay."

She wedded a man unlearned and poor,
And many children played round her door.

But care and sorrow, and childbirth pain,
Left their traces on heart and brain.

And oft, when the summer sun shone hot
On the new-mown hay in the meadow lot,

And she heard the little spring brook fall
Over the roadside, through the wall,

In the shade of the apple-tree again
She saw a rider draw his rein;

And, gazing down with timid grace,
She felt his pleased eyes read her face.

Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls
Stretched away into stately halls;

The weary wheel to a spinnet turned,
The tallow candle an astral burned,

And for him who sat by the chimney lug,
Dozing and grumbling o'er pipe and mug,

A manly form at her side she saw,
And joy was duty and love was law.

Then she took up her burden of life again,
Saying only, " It might have been."

Alas for maiden, alas for Judge,
For rich repiner and household drudge!

God pity them both; and pity us all,
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall.

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: "It might have been!"

Ah, well! for us all some sweet hope lies
Deeply buried from human eyes;

And, in the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away!

66. *Barbara Frietchie*

UP from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple and peach tree fruited deep,

Fair as the garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall
When Lee marched over the mountain-wall;

Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind: the sun
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down;

In her attic window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced; the old flag met his sight.

"Halt!" — the dust-brown ranks stood fast.
"Fire!" — out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash;
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.

She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

"Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country's flag," she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;

The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word;

"Who touches a hair of yon gray head
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.

All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet:

All day long that free flag tost
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night.

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.

Honor to her! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!

Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law;

And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town!

67. *Abraham Davenport*

IN the old days (a custom laid aside
With breeches and cocked hats) the people sent
Their wisest men to make the public laws.
And so, from a brown homestead, where the Sound
Drinks the small tribute of the Mianas,
Waved over by the woods of Rippowam,
And hallowed by pure lives and tranquil deaths,
Stamford sent up to the councils of the State
Wisdom and grace in Abraham Davenport.

'Twas on a May-day of the far old year
Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell
Over the bloom and sweet life of the Spring,
Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,
A horror of great darkness, like the night
In day of which the Norland sagas tell, —
The Twilight of the Gods. The low-hung sky
Was black with ominous clouds, save where its rim
Was fringed with a dull glow, like that which climbs
The crater's sides from the red hell below.
Birds ceased to sing, and all the barnyard fowls
Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars
Lowed, and looked homeward; bats on leathern wings
Flitted abroad; the sounds of labor died;
Men prayed, and women wept; all ears grew sharp
To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet shatter
The black sky, that the dreadful face of Christ
Might look from the rent clouds, not as he looked
A loving guest at Bethany, but stern
As Justice and inexorable Law.

Meanwhile in the old State House, dim as ghosts,
Sat the lawgivers of Connecticut,
Trembling beneath their legislative robes.
"It is the Lord's Great Day! Let us adjourn,"
Some said; and then, as if with one accord,
All eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport.
He rose, slow cleaving with his steady voice
The intolerable hush. "This well may be
The Day of Judgment which the world awaits;
But be it so or not, I only know
My present duty, and my Lord's command
To occupy till He come. So at the post
Where He hath set me in His providence,
I choose, for one, to meet Him face to face, —
No faithless servant frightened from my task,
But ready when the Lord of the harvest calls;
And therefore, with all reverence, I would say,
Let God do His work, we will see to ours.
Bring in the candles." And they brought them in.

Then by the flaring lights the Speaker read,
Albeit with husky voice and shaking hands,
An act to amend an act to regulate
The shad and alewive fisheries. Whereupon
Wisely and well spake Abraham Davenport,
Straight to the question, with no figures of speech
Save the ten Arab signs, yet not without
The shrewd dry humor natural to the man:
His awe-struck colleagues listening all the while,
Between the pauses of his argument,
To hear the thunder of the wrath of God
Break from the hollow trumpet of the cloud.

And there he stands in memory to this day,

Against the background of unnatural dark,
Erect, self-poised, a rugged face, half seen
A witness to the ages as they pass,
That simple duty hath no place for fear.

68. *From "Snow-Bound"*

UNWARMED by any sunset light
The gray day darkened into night,
A night made hoary with the swarm
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,
As zigzag, wavering to and fro,
Crossed and recrossed the wingëd snow:
And ere the early bedtime came
The white drift piled the window-frame,
And through the glass the clothes-line posts
Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts.

So all night long the storm roared on:
The morning broke without a sun;
In tiny spherule traced with lines
Of Nature's geometric signs,
In starry flake, and pellicle,
All day the hoary meteor fell;
And, when the second morning shone,
We looked upon a world unknown,
On nothing we could call our own.
Around the glistening wonder bent
The blue walls of the firmament,
No cloud above, no earth below, —
A universe of sky and snow!

The old familiar sights of ours
Took marvellous shapes; strange domes and towers
Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,
Or garden-wall, or belt of wood;
A smooth white mound the brush-pile showed,
A fenceless drift what once was road;
The bridle-post an old man sat
With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat;
The well-curb had a Chinese roof;
And even the long sweep, high aloof,
In its slant splendor, seemed to tell
Of Pisa's leaning miracle.

69. *Skipper Ireson's Ride*

OF all the rides since the birth of time,
Told in story or sung in rhyme,—
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,
Or one-eyed Calender's horse of brass,
Witch astride of a human back,
Islam's prophet on Al-Borák,—
The strangest ride that ever was sped
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
Feathered and ruffled in every part,
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.

Scores of women, old and young,
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his harrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
Bacchus round some antique vase,
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns' twang,
Over and over the Mænads sang:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Small pity for him! — He sailed away
From a leaking ship in Chaleur Bay, —
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
With his own town's-people on her deck!
"Lay by! lay by!" they called to him.
Back he answered, "Sink or swim!
Brag of your catch of fish again!"
And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
That wreck shall lie forevermore.
Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea, —
Looked for the coming that might not be!
What did the winds and the sea-birds say
Of the cruel captain who sailed away? —
  Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
  Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
    By the women of Marblehead!

Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,
Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:
  "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
  Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
    By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Sweetly along the Salem road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,
Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
Of voices shouting, far and near:

"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

"Hear me, neighbors!" at last he cried, —
"What to me is this noisy ride?
What is the shame that clothes the skin
To the nameless horror that lives within?
Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
Hate me and curse me, — I only dread
The hand of God and the face of the dead!"
Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
Said, "God has touched him! why should we!"
Said an old wife mourning her only son,
"Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!"
So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and sin.
Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

70. *The Eternal Goodness*

O FRIENDS! with whom my feet have trod
The quiet aisles of prayer,
Glad witness to your zeal for God
And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument;
Your logic linked and strong
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds:
Against the words ye bid me speak
My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?
Who talks of scheme and plan?
The Lord is God! He needeth not
The poor device of man.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground
Ye tread with boldness shod;
I dare not fix with mete and bound
The love and power of God.

Ye praise His justice; even such
His pitying love I deem:
Ye seek a king; I fain would touch
The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods
A world of pain and loss;
I hear our Lord's beatitudes
And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas! I know:
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above,
I know not of His hate, — I know
His goodness and His love.

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments too are right.

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And He can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruisëd reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee!

NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS

1807–1867

71. *Unseen Spirits*

THE shadows lay along Broadway,
'Twas near the twilight-tide,
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride.
Alone walked she; but, viewlessly,
Walked spirits at her side.

Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,
And Honor charmed the air;
And all astir looked kind on her,
And called her good as fair,
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare
From lovers warm and true,
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo —
But honored well are charms to sell
If priests the selling do.

Now walking there was one more fair —
A slight girl, lily-pale;
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail:
'Twixt Want and Scorn she walked forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray;
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way! —
But the sin forgiven by Christ in heaven
By man is cursed alway!

EDGAR ALLAN POE

1809–1849

72. *The Raven*

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore, —
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door:
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; — vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow — sorrow for the lost Lenore,
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore:
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me — filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door,
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door:
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you" — here I opened wide the door: —
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore:"
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore;
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore:
'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door,
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door:
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore, —
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore:
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning — little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door,
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered, not a feather then he fluttered,
Till I scarcely more than muttered, — "Other friends have flown before;
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore:
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of 'Never — nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore,
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee — by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite — respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or devil!
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted —
On this home by Horror haunted — tell me truly, I implore:
Is there — *is* there balm in Gilead? — tell me — tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil — prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us, by that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore:

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I
shrieked, upstarting:
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian
shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath
spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust above my
door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from
off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is
dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow
on the floor:
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the
floor
Shall be lifted — nevermore!

73. *The Bells*

I

HEAR the sledges with the bells,
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars, that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells —
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells,

What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells
On the Future! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells —
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III

Hear the loud alarum bells,
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now — now to sit or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour

On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,—
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells,
Of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV

Hear the tolling of the bells,
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.
And the people—ah, the people,
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,
And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone—

They are neither man nor woman,
They are neither brute nor human,
They are Ghouls:
And their king it is who tolls;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A pæan from the bells;
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells,
And he dances, and he yells:
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells,
Of the bells:
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells—
To the sobbing of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,
To the rolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells:
To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

74. *Ulalume*

THE skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crispëd and sere,
The leaves they were withering and sere;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir:
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll,
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole,
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
But our thoughts they were palsied and sere,
Our memories were treacherous and sere,
For we knew not the month was October,
And we marked not the night of the year,
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)
We noted not the dim lake of Auber
(Though once we had journeyed down here),
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
And star-dials pointed to morn,
As the star-dials hinted of morn,
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn,
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said — "She is warmer than Dian:
She rolls through an ether of sighs,
She revels in a region of sighs:
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion
To point us the path to the skies,
To the Lethean peace of the skies:
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes:
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said — "Sadly this star I mistrust,
Her pallor I strangely mistrust:
Oh, hasten! — oh, let us not linger!
Oh, fly! — let us fly! — for we must."
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust;
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust,
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied — "This is nothing but dreaming:
Let us on by this tremulous light!
Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
Its sibyllic splendor is beaming
With hope and in beauty to-night:
See, it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright:
We safely may trust to a gleaming
That cannot but guide us aright,
Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom,
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb,
By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said — "What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?"
She replied — "Ulalume — Ulalume —
'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crispëd and sere,
As the leaves that were withering and sere,
And I cried — "It was surely October
On this very night of last year
That I journey — I journey down here,
That I brought a dread burden down here:
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?

Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber,
This misty mid region of Weir:
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

75. *The Haunted Palace*

IN the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace —
Radiant palace — reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion,
It stood there;
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This — all this — was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingëd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tunëd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting,
Porphyrogene,
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
  Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
  And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
  Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
  The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
  Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
  Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
  That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
  Of the old time entombed.

And travellers now within that valley
  Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
  To a discordant melody;
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
  Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever,
  And laugh — but smile no more.

76. *The City in the Sea*

LO! Death has reared himself a throne
  In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best

Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently,
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free:
Up domes, up spires, up kingly halls,
Up fanes, up Babylon-like walls,
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers,
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathëd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye,—

Not the gayly-jewelled dead,
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas,
Along that wilderness of glass;
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea;
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene!

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave — there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide;
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven!
The waves have now a redder glow,
The hours are breathing faint and low;
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

77. *The Sleeper*

AT midnight, in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
Upon the quiet mountain-top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.

The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest;
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All beauty sleeps! — and lo! where lies
Irene, with her destinies!

O lady bright! can it be right,
This window open to the night?
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop;
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully, so fearfully,
Above the closed and fringëd lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall.
O lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor: strange thy dress:
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps. Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!

This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopened eye,
While the pale sheeted ghosts go by.
My love, she sleeps. Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep!
Soft may the worms about her creep!
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold:
Some vault that oft hath flung its black
And wingëd panels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls
Of her grand family funerals:
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone:
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin,
It was the dead who groaned within!

78. *Annabel Lee*

IT was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love,
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me;
Yes, that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we,
Of many far wiser than we;
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling, — my darling, — my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

79. *To Helen*

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

80. *To One in Paradise*

THOU wast all that to me, love,
For which my soul did pine:
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope, that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
"On! on!" — but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast.

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
No more — no more — no more —
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar.

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy gray eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams —
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

1809–1894

81. *The Chambered Nautilus*

THIS is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main, —
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed, —
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born

Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings: —

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

82. *The Last Leaf*

I SAW him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
  Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
  "They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
  In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
  On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said —
Poor old lady, she is dead
  Long ago —
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
  In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
  Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
  In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
  At him here;

But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

83. *Dorothy Q.*

GRANDMOTHER'S mother: her age, I guess,
Thirteen summers, or something less;
Girlish bust, but womanly air;
Smooth, square forehead with uprolled hair,
Lips that lover has never kissed;
Taper fingers and slender wrist;
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade;
So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green
Sits unmoving and broods serene.
Hold up the canvas full in view,—
Look! there's a rent the light shines through,
Dark with a century's fringe of dust,—
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust!
Such is the tale the lady old,
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

Who the painter was none may tell, —
One whose best was not over well;
Hard and dry, it must be confessed,
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed;
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,
Dainty colors of red and white,
And in her slender shape are seen
Hint and promise of stately mien.

Look not on her with eyes of scorn, —
Dorothy Q. was a lady born!
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,
England's annals have known her name;
And still to the three-hilled rebel town
Dear is that ancient name's renown,
For many a civic wreath they won,
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q.!
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring, —
All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

What if a hundred years ago
Those close-shut lips had answered No,
When forth the tremulous questions came
That cost the maiden her Norman name,

And under the folds that look so still
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?
Should I be I, or would it be
One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's YES:
Not the light gossamer stirs with less;
But never a cable that holds so fast
Through all the battles of wave and blast,
And never an echo of speech or song
That lives in the babbling air so long!
There were tones in the voice that whispered then
You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far
Your images hover, — and here we are,
Solid and stirring in flesh and bone, —
Edward's and Dorothy's — all their own, —
A goodly record for Time to show
Of a syllable spoken so long ago! —
Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive
For the tender whisper that bade me live?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid!
I will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,
And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,
And gild with a rhyme your household name;
So you shall smile on us brave and bright
As first you greeted the morning's light,
And live untroubled by woes and fears
Through a second youth of a hundred years.

84. *After A Lecture on Keats*

"Purpureos spargam flores."

THE wreath that star-crowned Shelley gave
Is lying on thy Roman grave,
Yet on its turf young April sets
Her store of slender violets;
Though all the gods their garlands shower,
I too may bring one purple flower.
—Alas! what blossom shall I bring,
That opens in my Northern spring?
The garden beds have all run wild,
So trim when I was yet a child;
Flat plantains and unseemly stalks
Have crept across the gravel walks;
The vines are dead, long, long ago,
The almond buds no longer blow.
No more upon its mound I see
The azure, plume-bound fleur-de-lis;
Where once the tulips used to show,
In straggling tufts the pansies grow;
The grass has quenched my white-rayed gem,
The flowering "Star of Bethlehem,"
Though its long blade of glossy green
And pallid stripe may still be seen.
Nature, who treads her nobles down,
And gives their birthright to the clown,
Has sown her base-born weedy things
Above the garden's queens and kings.
—Yet one sweet flower of ancient race
Springs in the old familiar place.

When snows were melting down the vale,
And Earth unlaced her icy mail,
And March his stormy trumpet blew,
And tender green came peeping through,
I loved the earliest one to seek
That broke the soil with emerald beak,
And watch the trembling bells so blue
Spread on the column as it grew.
Meek child of earth! thou wilt not shame
The sweet, dead poet's holy name;
The God of music gave thee birth,
Called from the crimson-spotted earth,
Where, sobbing his young life away,
His own fair Hyacinthus lay.
— The hyacinth my garden gave
Shall lie upon that Roman grave!

85. *The Deacon's Masterpiece;*

or, *The Wonderful "One-Hoss Shay."*

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it —— ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits, —
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive, —
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot, —
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace, — lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will, —
Above or below, or within or without, —
And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,
That a chaise *breaks down*, but doesn't *wear out*.

But the Deacon swore, (as Deacons do,
With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell *yeou*,")
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'n' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
It should be so built that it *couldn'* break daown:
— "Fur," said the Deacon, "'t 's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
'n' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
Is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That couldn't be split nor bent nor broke, —
That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum," —
Last of its timber, — they couldn't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
That was the way he "put her through." —
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren — where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

Eighteen hundred; — it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.

Eighteen hundred increased by ten; —
"Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came; —
Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arrive,
And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it. — You 're welcome. — No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER, — the Earthquake-day —
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
A general flavor of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There couldn't be, — for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there wasn't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out!*

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson. — Off went they.
The parson was working his Sunday's text, —
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the — Moses — was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
— First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill, —
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half past nine by the meet'n'-house clock, —
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!

— What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once, —
All at once, and nothing first, —
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

1817–1862

86. *Inspiration*

IF with light head erect I sing,
Though all the Muses lend their force,
From my poor love of anything,
The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

But if with bended neck I grope
Listening behind me for my wit,
With faith superior to hope,
More anxious to keep back than forward it, —

Making my soul accomplice there
Unto the flame my heart hath lit,
Then will the verse forever wear, —
Time cannot bend the line which God has writ.

I hearing get, who had but ears,
And sight, who had but eyes before;
I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern, who knew but learning's lore.

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life;
Of manhood's strength it is the flower,
'Tis peace's end, and war's beginning strife.

It comes in summer's broadest noon,
By a gray wall, or some chance place,
Unseasoning time, insulting June,
And vexing day with its presuming face.

I will not doubt the love untold
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,
Which wooed me young, and woos me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.

87. *The Fisher's Boy*

MY life is like a stroll upon the beach,
As near the ocean's edge as I can go;
My tardy steps its waves sometimes o'erreach,
Sometimes I stay to let them overflow.

My sole employment is, and scrupulous care,
To place my gains beyond the reach of tides, —
Each smoother pebble, and each shell more rare,
Which Ocean kindly to my hand confides.

I have but few companions on the shore:
They scorn the strand who sail upon the sea;
Yet oft I think the ocean they've sailed o'er
Is deeper known upon the strand to me.

The middle sea contains no crimson dulse,
Its deeper waves cast up no pearls to view;
Along the shore my hand is on its pulse,
And I converse with many a shipwrecked crew.

WALT WHITMAN

1819–1892

88. *From "Song of Myself"*

I

I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you
I loaf and invite my soul,
I lean and loaf at my ease observing a spear of summe
grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, formed from th
soil, this air,
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, an
their parents the same,
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,
Retiring back awhile sufficed at what they are, but neve
forgotten,
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazar
Nature without check with original energy.

A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with fu
hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it
any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hop
ful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropped,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say *Whose?*

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,
Growing among black folks as among white,
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I gave them the same, I receive them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you curling grass,
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them,
It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon out of their mothers' laps,
And here you are the mothers' laps.

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers,
Darker than the colorless beards of old men,
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues,
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing.

I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women,
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon out of their laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere,
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it,
And ceased the moment life appeared.
All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.

89. When I Heard at the Close of the Day

WHEN I heard at the close of the day how my name had been receiv'd with plaudits in the capitol, still it was not a happy night for me that follow'd,
And else when I carous'd, or when my plans were accomplish'd, still I was not happy,
But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of perfect health, refresh'd, singing, inhaling the ripe breath of autumn,
When I saw the full moon in the west grow pale and disappear in the morning light,

When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undressing bathed, laughing with the cool waters, and saw the sun rise,
And when I thought how my dear friend my lover was on his way coming, O then I was happy,
O then each breath tasted sweeter, and all that day my food nourish'd me more, and the beautiful day pass'd well,
And the next came with equal joy, and with the next at evening came my friend,
And that night while all was still I heard the waters roll slowly continually up the shores,
I heard the hissing rustle of the liquid and sands as directed to me whispering to congratulate me,
For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the same cover in the cool night,
In the stillness in the autumn moonbeams his face was inclined toward me,
And his arm lay lightly around my breast — and that night I was happy.

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me,
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride,
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,
I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?
It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one,
and still pass on.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night,
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.

Press close bare-bosom'd night — press close magnetic
nourishing night!
Night of south winds — night of the large few stars!
Still nodding night — mad naked summer night.

Smile O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
Earth of departed sunset — earth of the mountains misty-
topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged
with blue!
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer
for my sake!
Far-swooping elbow'd earth — rich apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes.

Prodigal, you have given me love — therefore I to you
give love!
O unspeakable passionate love.

I have said that the soul is not more than the body,
And I have said that the body is not more than the soul,
And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is,
And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own funeral drest in his shroud,
And I or you pocketless of a dime may purchase the pick of the earth,
And to glance with an eye or show a beam in its pod confounds the learning of all times,
And there is no trade or employment but the young man following it may become a hero,
And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe,
And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand cool and composed before a million universes.

And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God,
For I who am curious about each am not curious about God,
(No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about death.)

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment then,
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass,

I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every
one is sign'd by God's name,
And I leave them where they are, for I know that where-
soe'er I go,
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

90. *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*

OUT of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the
child leaving his bed wandered alone, bareheaded,
barefoot,
Down from the showered halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting
as if they were alive,
Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories, sad brother, from the fitful risings
and fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen
as if with tears,
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there
in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-aroused words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,

Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briers,
Two feathered guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouched on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.

Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we bask, we two together.

Till of a sudden,
Maybe killed, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouched not on the nest,
Nor returned that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appeared again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Yes, when the stars glistened,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scalloped stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He called on his mate,
He poured forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes, my brother, I know, —
The rest might not, but I have treasured every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,

Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds
and sights after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listened long and long.

Listened to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you, my brother.

Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.

Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging — O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.

O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?

Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!

High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.

Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusty spot in your brown yellow?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon, do not keep her from me any longer.

Land! land! O land!
Whichever way I turn, O, I think you could give me my mate back again if you only would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.

O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.

O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols!

But soft! sink low!
Soft! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment, you husky-noised sea,
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,

So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come
immediately to me.

Hither, my love!
Here I am! here!
With this just-sustained note I announce myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.

Do not be decoyed elsewhere:
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.

O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful.

O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the
sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.

The aria sinking,
All else continuing, the stars shining,
The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echo-
ing,

With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face of the sea almost touching,
The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the atmosphere dallying,
The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously bursting,
The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,
The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drown'd secret hissing,
To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird (said the boy's soul)
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never to die.

O you singers solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,

Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there aroused, the fire, the sweet hell within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me.
O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere)
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it)
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up — what is it? — I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whispered me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,
Lisped to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my aroused child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me, rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all over,
Death, death, death, death, death.
Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,

That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments, bending aside)
The sea whispered me.

91. *To the Man-of-War-Bird*

THOU who hast slept all night upon the storm,
Waking renewed on thy prodigious pinions,
(Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascendedst,
And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee)
Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee,
(Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast.)

Far, far at sea,
After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,
With re-appearing day as now so happy and serene,
The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
The limpid spread of air cerulean,
Thou also re-appearest.

Thou born to match the gale, (thou art all wings)
To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,

Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,
Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms gyrating,
At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn America,
That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-cloud,
In them, in thy experiences, hadst thou my soul,
What joys! what joys were thine!

92. *Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun*

GIVE me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling,
Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,
Give me a field where the unmowed grass grows,
Give me an arbor, give me the trellised grape,
Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals teaching content,
Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high plateaus west of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the stars,
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers where I can walk undisturbed,
Give me for marriage a sweet-breathed woman of whom I should never tire,
Give me a perfect child, give me, away aside from the noise of the world, a rural domestic life,
Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my own ears only,
Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me again O Nature your primal sanities!

These demanding to have them, (tired with ceaseless excitement, and racked by the war-strife)
These to procure incessantly asking, rising in cries from my heart,
While yet incessantly asking still I adhere to my city,
Day upon day and year upon year, O city, walking your streets,
Where you hold me enchained a certain time refusing to give me up,
Yet giving to make me glutted, enriched of soul, you give me forever faces;
(O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing my cries,
I see my own soul trampling down what it asked for.)

Keep your splendid silent sun,
Keep your woods, O Nature, and the quiet places by the woods,
Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your cornfields and orchards,
Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields where the Ninth-month bees hum;
Give me faces and streets — give me these phantoms incessant and endless along the trottoirs!
Give me interminable eyes — give me women — give me comrades and lovers by the thousand!
Let me see new ones every day — let me hold new ones by the hand every day!
Give me such shows — give me the streets of Manhattan!
Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching — give me the sound of the trumpets and drums!

(The soldiers in companies or regiments — some starting away flushed and reckless,
Some, their time up, returning with thinned ranks, young, yet very old, worn, marching, noticing nothing;)
Give me the shores and wharves heavy-fringed with black ships!
O such for me! O an intense life, full of repletion and varied!
The life of the theatre, bar-room, huge hotel, for me!
The saloon of the steamer! The crowded excursion for me! The torchlight procession!
The dense brigade bound for the war, with high-piled military wagons following;
People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions, pageants,
Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs, with beating drums as now,
The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of muskets (even the sight of the wounded),
Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus!
Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.

93. *O Captain! My Captain!*

O CAPTAIN! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths — for you the shores acrowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You 've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

94. *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*

I

WHEN lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

II

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night — O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd — O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless — O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

III

In the doorway fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,

With every leaf a miracle — and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

IV

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life, (for well dear brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die.)

And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love — but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come,
come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing
the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O death.

95. *Darest Thou Now, O Soul*

DAREST thou now, O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?

No map there, nor guide,
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not, O soul!
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us, —
All waits undreamed of in that region, that inaccessible land.

Till when the tie is loosened,
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,
In Time and Space, O soul! prepared for them,
Equal, equipped at last, (O joy! O fruit of all!) them to fulfil, O soul!

96. *Good-bye My Fancy!*

GOOD–BYE my Fancy!
Farewell dear mate, dear love!
I'm going away, I know not where,
Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,
So good-bye my Fancy.

Now for my last — let me look back a moment;
The slower fainter ticking of the clock is in me,
Exit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud stopping.

Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;
Delightful! — now separation — Good-bye my Fancy.

Yet let me not be too hasty,
Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd, become really
blended into one;
Then if we die we die together, (yes, we'll remain one,)
If we go anywhere we'll go together to meet what happens,
May-be we'll be better off and blither, and learn some-
thing,
May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true
songs, (who knows?)
May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning
—so now finally,
Good-bye—and hail! my Fancy.

WILLIAM WETMORE STORY

1819–1895

97. *Cleopatra*

HERE, Charmian, take my bracelets:
They bar with a purple stain
My arms; turn over my pillows—
They are hot where I have lain:
Open the lattice wider,
A gauze o'er my bosom throw,
And let me inhale the odors
That over the garden blow.

I dreamed I was with my Antony,
And in his arms I lay;
Ah, me! the vision has vanished—
The music has died away.

The flame and the perfume have perished —
As this spiced aromatic pastille
That wound the blue smoke of its odor
Is now but an ashy hill.

Scatter upon me rose leaves,
They cool me after my sleep,
And with sandal odors fan me
Till into my veins they creep;
Reach down the lute, and play me
A melancholy tune,
To rhyme with the dream that has vanished
And the slumbering afternoon.

There, drowsing in golden sunlight,
Loiters the slow smooth Nile,
Through slender papyri, that cover
The wary crocodile.
The lotus lolls on the water,
And opens its heart of gold,
And over its broad leaf pavement
Never a ripple is rolled.
The twilight breeze is too lazy
Those feathery palms to wave,
And yon little cloud is as motionless
As a stone above a grave.

Ah, me! this lifeless nature
Oppresses my heart and brain!
Oh! for a storm and thunder —
For lightning and wild fierce rain!

Fling down that lute — I hate it!
Take rather his buckler and sword,
And crash them and clash them together
Till this sleeping world is stirred.

Hark! to my Indian beauty —
My cockatoo, creamy white,
With roses under his feathers —
That flashes across the light.
Look! listen! as backward and forward
To his hoop of gold he clings,
How he trembles, with crest uplifted,
And shrieks as he madly swings!
Oh, cockatoo, shriek for Antony!
Cry, "Come, my love, come home!"
Shriek, "Antony! Antony! Antony!"
Till he hears you even in Rome.

There — leave me, and take from my chamber
That stupid little gazelle,
With its bright black eyes so meaningless,
And its silly tinkling bell!
Take him, — my nerves he vexes —
The thing without blood or brain,
Or, by the body of Isis,
I'll snap his thin neck in twain!

Leave me to gaze at the landscape
Mistily stretching away,
Where the afternoon's opaline tremors
O'er the mountains quivering play;
Till the fiercer splendor of sunset
Pours from the west its fire,

And melted, as in a crucible,
Their earthy forms expire;
And the bald blear skull of the desert
With glowing mountains is crowned,
That burning like molten jewels
Circle its temples round.

I will lie and dream of the past time,
Æons of thought away,
And through the jungle of memory
Loosen my fancy to play;
When, a smooth and velvety tiger,
Ribbed with yellow and black,
Supple and cushion-footed
I wandered, where never the track
Of a human creature had rustled
The silence of mighty woods,
And, fierce in a tyrannous freedom,
I knew but the law of my moods.
The elephant, trumpeting, started,
When he heard my footstep near,
And the spotted giraffes fled wildly
In a yellow cloud of fear.
I sucked in the noontide splendor,
Quivering along the glade,
Or yawning, panting, and dreaming,
Basked in the tamarisk shade,
Till I heard my wild mate roaring,
As the shadows of night came on
To brood in the trees' thick branches,
And the shadow of sleep was gone;

Then I roused, and roared in answer,
And unsheathed from my cushioned feet
My curving claws, and stretched me,
And wandered my mate to greet.
We toyed in the amber moonlight,
Upon the warm flat sand,
And struck at each other our massive arms —
How powerful he was and grand!
His yellow eyes flashed fiercely
As he crouched and gazed at me,
And his quivering tail, like a serpent,
Twitched curving nervously.
Then like a storm he seized me,
With a wild triumphant cry,
And we met, as two clouds in heaven
When the thunders before them fly.
We grappled and struggled together,
For his love like his rage was rude;
And his teeth in the swelling folds of my neck
At times, in our play, drew blood.

Often another suitor —
For I was flexile and fair —
Fought for me in the moonlight,
While I lay couching there,
Till his blood was drained by the desert;
And, ruffled with triumph and power,
He licked me and lay beside me
To breathe him a vast half-hour.

Then down to the fountain we loitered,
Where the antelopes came to drink;

Like a bolt we sprang upon them,
  Ere they had time to shrink.
We drank their blood and crushed them,
  And tore them limb from limb,
And the hungriest lion doubted
  Ere he disputed with him.

That was a life to live for!
  Not this weak human life,
With its frivolous bloodless passions,
  Its poor and petty strife!

Come to my arms, my hero!
  The shadows of twilight grow,
And the tiger's ancient fierceness
  In my veins begins to flow.
Come not cringing to sue me!
  Take me with triumph and power,
As a warrior storms a fortress!
  I will not shrink or cower.
Come, as you came in the desert,
  Ere we were women and men,
When the tiger passions were in us,
  And love as you loved me then!

98. *Praxiteles and Phryne*

A THOUSAND silent years ago,
  The twilight faint and pale
Was drawing o'er the sunset glow
  Its soft and shadowy veil;

When from his work the Sculptor stayed
His hand, and, turned to one
Who stood beside him, half in shade,
Said, with a sigh, "'Tis done.

"Thus much is saved from chance and change,
That waits for me and thee;
Thus much — how little! — from the range
Of Death and Destiny.

"Phryne, thy human lips shall pale,
Thy rounded limbs decay, —
Nor love nor prayers can aught avail
To bid thy beauty stay;

"But there thy smile for centuries
On marble lips shall live, —
For Art can grant what Love denies,
And fix the fugitive.

"Sad thought! nor age nor death shall fade
The youth of this cold bust;
When this quick brain and hand that made,
And thou and I are dust!

"When all our hopes and fears are dead,
And both our hearts are cold,
And love is like a tune that's played,
And life a tale that's told,

"This senseless stone, so coldly fair,
That love nor life can warm,
The same enchanting look shall wear,
The same enchanting form.

"Its peace no sorrow shall destroy;
Its beauty age shall spare
The bitterness of vanished joy,
The wearing waste of care.

"And there upon that silent face
Shall unborn ages see
Perennial youth, perennial grace,
And sealed serenity.

"And strangers, when we sleep in peace,
Shall say, not quite unmoved,
'So smiled upon Praxiteles
The Phryne whom he loved!'"

THOMAS DUNN ENGLISH

1819–1902

99. *Ben Bolt*

DON'T you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt,—
Sweet Alice whose hair was so brown,
Who wept with delight when you gave her a smile,
And trembled with fear at your frown?
In the old church-yard in the valley, Ben Bolt,
In a corner obscure and alone,
They have fitted a slab of the granite so gray,
And Alice lies under the stone.

Under the hickory tree, Ben Bolt,
Which stood at the foot of the hill,
Together we've lain in the noonday shade,
And listened to Appleton's mill.

The mill-wheel has fallen to pieces, Ben Bolt,
The rafters have tumbled in,
And a quiet which crawls round the walls as you gaze
Has followed the olden din.

Do you mind of the cabin of logs, Ben Bolt,
At the edge of the pathless wood,
And the button-ball tree with its motley limbs,
Which nigh by the doorstep stood?
The cabin to ruin has gone, Ben Bolt,
The tree you would seek for in vain;
And where once the lords of the forest waved
Are grass and the golden grain.

And don't you remember the school, Ben Bolt,
With the master so cruel and grim,
And the shaded nook in the running brook
Where the children went to swim?
Grass grows on the master's grave, Ben Bolt,
The spring of the brook is dry,
And of all the boys who were schoolmates then
There are only you and I.

There is change in the things I loved, Ben Bolt,
They have changed from the old to the new;
But I feel in the deeps of my spirit the truth,
There never was change in you.
Twelvemonths twenty have past, Ben Bolt,
Since first we were friends — yet I hail
Your presence a blessing, your friendship a truth,
Ben Bolt of the salt-sea gale.

THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS

1819–1892

100. *On A Bust of Dante*

SEE, from this counterfeit of him
Whom Arno shall remember long,
How stern of lineament, how grim,
The father was of Tuscan song:
There but the burning sense of wrong,
Perpetual care and scorn, abide;
Small friendship for the lordly throng;
Distrust of all the world beside.

Faithful if this wan image be,
No dream his life was, — but a fight!
Could any Beatrice see
A lover in that anchorite?
To that cold Ghibelline's gloomy sight
Who could have guessed the visions came
Of Beauty, veiled with heavenly light,
In circles of eternal flame?

The lips of Cumæ's cavern close,
The cheeks with fast and sorrow thin,
The rigid front, almost morose,
But for the patient hope within,
Declare a life whose course hath been
Unsullied still, though still severe,
Which, through the wavering days of sin,
Kept itself icy-chaste and clear.

Not wholly such his haggard look
When wandering once, forlorn, he strayed,
With no companion save his book,

To Corvo's hushed monastic shade;
Where, as the Benedictine laid
His palm upon the convent's guest,
The single boon for which he prayed
Was peace, that pilgrim's one request.

Peace dwells not here, — this rugged face
Betrays no spirit of repose;
The sullen warrior sole we trace,
The marble man of many woes.
Such was his mien when first arose
The thought of that strange tale divine,
When hell he peopled with his foes,
Dread scourge of many a guilty line.

War to the last he waged with all
The tyrant canker-worms of earth;
Baron and duke, in hold and hall,
Cursed the dark hour that gave him birth;
He used Rome's harlot for his mirth;
Plucked bare hypocrisy and crime;
But valiant souls of knightly worth
Transmitted to the rolls of Time.

O Time! whose verdicts mock our own,
The only righteous judge art thou;
That poor old exile, sad and lone,
Is Latium's other Virgil now:
Before his name the nations bow;
His words are parcel of mankind,
Deep in whose hearts, as on his brow,
The marks have sunk of Dante's mind.

101.

Dirge

For One Who Fell in Battle

ROOM for a soldier! lay him in the clover;
He loved the fields, and they shall be his cover;
Make his mound with hers who called him once her lover:
Where the rain may rain upon it,
Where the sun may shine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the bee will dine upon it.

Bear him to no dismal tomb under city churches;
Take him to the fragrant fields, by the silver birches,
Where the whip-poor-will shall mourn, where the oriole perches:
Make his mound with sunshine on it.
Where the bee will dine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the rain will rain upon it.
Busy as the bee was he, and his rest should be the clover;
Gentle as the lamb was he, and the fern should be his cover;
Fern and rosemary shall grow my soldier's pillow over:
Where the rain may rain upon it,
Where the sun may shine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the bee will dine upon it.

Sunshine in his heart, the rain would come full often
Out of those tender eyes which evermore did soften:
He never could look cold till we saw him in his coffin.

Make his mound with sunshine on it,
Plant the lordly pine upon it,
Where the moon may stream upon it,
And memory shall dream upon it.

"Captain or Colonel," — whatever invocation
Suit our hymn the best, no matter for thy station, —
On thy grave the rain shall fall from the eyes of a mighty nation!
Long as the sun doth shine upon it
Shall glow the goodly pine upon it,
Long as the stars do gleam upon it
Shall memory come to dream upon it.

102. *Mary Booth*

WHAT shall we do now, Mary being dead,
Or say or write that shall express the half?
What can we do but pillow that fair head,
And let the Spring-time write her epitaph! —

As it will soon, in snowdrop, violet,
Wind-flower and columbine and maiden's tear;
Each letter of that pretty alphabet,
That spells in flowers the pageant of the year.

She was a maiden for a man to love;
She was a woman for a husband's life;
One that has learned to value, far above
The name of love, the sacred name of wife.

Her little life-dream, rounded so with sleep,
  Had all there is of life, except gray hairs, —
Hope, love, trust, passion, and devotion deep;
  And that mysterious tie a mother bears.

She hath fulfilled her promise and hath passed;
  Set her down gently at the iron door!
Eyes look on that loved image for the last:
  Now cover it in earth, — her earth no more.

103. *Paradisi Gloria*

"O frate mio! ciascuna e cittadina
D' una vera città" . . .

THERE is a city, builded by no hand,
  And unapproachable by sea or shore,
And unassailable by any band
  Of storming soldiery for evermore.

There we no longer shall divide our time
  By acts or pleasures, — doing petty things
Of work or warfare, merchandise or rhyme;
  But we shall sit beside the silver springs

That flow from God's own footstool, and behold
  Sages and martyrs, and those blessed few
Who loved us once and were beloved of old;
  To dwell with them and walk with them anew,

THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS

In alternations of sublime repose,
Musical motion, the perpetual play
Of every faculty that Heaven bestows
Through the bright, busy, and eternal day.

JULIA WARD HOWE

1819–1910

104. Battle-Hymn of the Republic

MINE eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps.
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call
retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment-
seat:
Oh! be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my
feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me:
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

1819–1891

105. *St. Michael the Weigher*

STOOD the tall Archangel weighing
All man's dreaming, doing, saying,
All the failure and the pain,
All the triumph and the gain,
In the unimagined years,
Full of hopes, more full of tears,
Since old Adam's hopeless eyes
Backward searched for Paradise,
And, instead, the flame-blade saw
Of inexorable Law.
Waking, I beheld him there,
With his fire-gold, flickering hair,
In his blinding armor stand,
And the scales were in his hand:
Mighty were they, and full well
They could poise both heaven and hell.

"Angel," asked I humbly then,
"Weighest thou the souls of men?
That thine office is, I know."
"Nay," he answered me, "not so;
But I weigh the hope of Man
Since the power of choice began,
In the world, of good or ill."
Then I waited and was still.

In one scale I saw him place
All the glories of our race,
Cups that lit Belshazzar's feast,
Gems, the lightning of the East,
Kublai's sceptre, Cæsar's sword,
Many a poet's golden word,
Many a skill of science, vain
To make men as gods again.

In the other scale he threw
Things regardless, outcast, few,
Martyr-ash, arena sand,
Of St. Francis' cord a strand,
Beechen cups of men whose need
Fasted that the poor might feed,
Disillusions and despairs
Of young saints with grief-grayed hairs,
Broken hearts that brake 'for Man.

Marvel through my pulses ran
Seeing then the beam divine
Swiftly on this hand decline,
While Earth's splendor and renown
Mounted light as thistle-down.

106. *Aladdin*

WHEN I was a beggarly boy
And lived in a cellar damp,
I had not a friend nor a toy,
But I had Aladdin's lamp;
When I could not sleep for the cold,
I had fire enough in my brain,
And builded, with roofs of gold,
My beautiful castles in Spain!

Since then I have toiled day and night,
I have money and power good store,
But I'd give all my lamps of silver bright
For the one that is mine no more;
Take, Fortune, whatever you choose,
You gave, and may snatch again;
I have nothing 'twould pain me to lose,
For I own no more castles in Spain!

107. *The Courtin'*

GOD makes sech nights, all white an' still
Fur 'z you can look or listen,
Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,
All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown
An' peeked in thru' the winder,
An' there sot Huldy all alone,
'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side
With half a cord o' wood in —
There warn't no stoves (tell comfort died)
To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out
Towards the pootiest, bless her,
An' leetle flames danced all about
The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,
An' in amongst 'em rusted
The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young
Fetched back f'om Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,
Seemed warm f'om floor to ceilin',
An' she looked full rosy agin
Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'Twas kin' o' kingdom-come to look
On sech a blessed cretur,
A dogrose blushin' to a brook
Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,
Clear grit an' human natur',
None couldn't quicker pitch a ton
Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He'd sparked it with full twenty gals,
Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,
Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells —
All is, he couldn't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run
All crinkly like curled maple,
The side she breshed felt full o' sun
Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing
Ez hisn in the choir;
My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,
She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,
When her new meetin'-bunnet
Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair
O' blue eyes sot upon it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some!*
She seemed to 've gut a new soul,
For she felt sartin-sure he'd come,
Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,
A-raspin' on the scraper, —
All ways to once her feelin's flew
Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,
Some doubtfle o' the sekle,
His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,
But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk
Ez though she wished him furder,
An' on her apples kep' to work,
Parin' away like murder.

"You want to see my Pa, I s'pose? "
"Wal . . . no . . . I come dasignin' " —
"To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es
Agin to-morrer's i'nin'."

To say why gals act so or so,
Or don't, 'ould be persumin';
Mebby to mean *yes* an' say *no*
Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,
Then stood a spell on t'other,
An' on which one he felt the wust
He couldn't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, "I'd better call agin:"
Says she, "Think likely, Mister:"
Thet last word pricked him like a pin,
An' . . . Wal, he up an' kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,
Huldy sot pale ez ashes,
All kin' o' smily roun' the lips
An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind
Whose naturs never vary,
Like streams that keep a summer mind
Snowhid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued
Too tight for all expressin',
Tell mother see how metters stood,
An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide
Down to the Bay o' Fundy,
An' all I know is they cried
In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

108. From "The Vision of Sir Launfal"

AND what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays;
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest, —
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

109. *To the Dandelion*

DEAR common flower, that grow'st beside the way
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth, thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;
'Tis the Spring's largess, which she scatters now.
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:
Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee
Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment
In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue
That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing
With news from heaven, which he could bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!
Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,
Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

110. *The Shepherd of King Admetus*

THERE came a youth upon the earth,
Some thousand years ago,
Whose slender hands were nothing worth,
Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell
He stretched some chords, and drew
Music that made men's bosoms swell
Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.

Then King Admetus, one who had
Pure taste by right divine,
Decreed his singing not too bad
To hear between the cups of wine:

And so, well pleased with being soothed
Into a sweet half-sleep,
Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,
And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

His words were simple words enough,
And yet he used them so,
That what in other mouths was rough
In his seemed musical and low.

Men called him but a shiftless youth,
In whom no good they saw;
And yet, unwittingly, in truth,
They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,
For idly, hour by hour,
He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,
Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things
Did teach him all their use,
For, in mere weeds, and stones, and springs,
He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,
But, when a glance they caught
Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,
They laughed, and called him good-for-naught.

Yet after he was dead and gone,
And e'en his memory dim,
Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,
More full of love, because of him.

And day by day more holy grew
Each spot where he had trod,
Till after-poets only knew
Their first-born brother as a god.

THEODORE O'HARA

1820–1867

111. *The Bivouac of the Dead*

THE muffled drum's sad roll has beat
The soldier's last tattoo;
No more on Life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen few.

On Fame's eternal camping-ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards, with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead.

No rumor of the foe's advance
Now swells upon the wind;
No troubled thought at midnight haunts
Of loved ones left behind;
No vision of the morrow's strife
The warrior's dream alarms;
No braying horn nor screaming fife
At dawn shall call to arms.

Their shivered swords are red with rust,
Their plumëd heads are bowed;
Their haughty banner, trailed in dust,
Is now their martial shroud.
And plenteous funeral tears have washed
The red stains from each brow,
And the proud forms, by battle gashed,
Are free from anguish now.

The neighing troop, the flashing blade,
The bugle's stirring blast,
The charge, the dreadful cannonade,
The din and shout, are past;
Nor war's wild note nor glory's peal
Shall thrill with fierce delight
Those breasts that nevermore may feel
The rapture of the fight.

Like the fierce northern hurricane
That sweeps his great plateau,
Flushed with the triumph yet to gain,
Came down the serried foe.
Who heard the thunder of the fray
Break o'er the field beneath,
Knew well the watchword of that day
Was "Victory or Death."

Long had the doubtful conflict raged
O'er all that stricken plain,
For never fiercer fight had waged
The vengeful blood of Spain;
And still the storm of battle blew,
Still swelled the gory tide;
Not long, our stout old chieftain knew,
Such odds his strength could bide.

'Twas in that hour his stern command
Called to a martyr's grave
The flower of his beloved land,
The nation's flag to save.
By rivers of their fathers' gore
His first-born laurels grew,
And well he deemed the sons would pour
Their lives for glory too.

Full many a norther's breath has swept
O'er Angostura's plain,
And long the pitying sky has wept
Above its mouldered slain.

The raven's scream, or eagle's flight,
Or shepherd's pensive lay,
Alone awakes each sullen height
That frowned o'er that dread fray.

Sons of the Dark and Bloody Ground,
Ye must not slumber there,
Where stranger steps and tongues resound
Along the heedless air.
Your own proud land's heroic soil
Shall be your fitter grave:
She claims from war his richest spoil —
The ashes of her brave.

Thus 'neath their parent turf they rest,
Far from the gory field,
Borne to a Spartan mother's breast
On many a bloody shield;
The sunshine of their native sky
Smiles sadly on them here,
And kindred eyes and hearts watch by
The heroes' sepulchre.

Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead!
Dear as the blood ye gave;
No impious footstep here shall tread
The herbage of your grave;
Nor shall your glory be forgot
While Fame her record keeps,
Or Honor points the hallowed spot
Where Valor proudly sleeps.

Yon marble minstrel's voiceless stone
  In deathless song shall tell,
When many a vanished age hath flown,
  The story how ye fell;
Nor wreck, nor change, nor winter's blight,
  Nor Time's remorseless doom,
Shall dim one ray of glory's light
  That gilds your deathless tomb.

HENRY HOWARD BROWNELL

1820–1872

112. *The Burial of the Dane*

BLUE gulf all around us,
  Blue sky overhead —
Muster all on the quarter,
  We must bury the dead!

It is but a Danish sailor,
  Rugged of front and form;
A common son of the forecastle,
  Grizzled with sun and storm.

His name, and the strand he hailed from
  We know, and there's nothing more!
But perhaps his mother is waiting
  In the lonely Island of Fohr.

Still, as he lay there dying,
  Reason drifting awreck,
"'Tis my watch," he would mutter,
  "I must go upon deck!"

Aye, on deck, by the foremast!
  But watch and lookout are done;
The Union Jack laid o'er him,
  How quiet he lies in the sun!

Slow the ponderous engine,
  Stay the hurrying shaft;
Let the roll of the ocean
  Cradle our giant craft;
Gather around the grating,
  Carry your messmate aft!

Stand in order, and listen
  To the holiest page of prayer!
Let every foot be quiet,
  Every head be bare —
The soft trade-wind is lifting
  A hundred locks of hair.

Our captain reads the service,
  (A little spray on his cheeks)
The grand old words of burial,
  And the trust a true heart seeks: —
"We therefore commit his body
  To the deep" — and, as he speaks,

Launched from the weather railing,
  Swift as the eye can mark,
The ghastly, shotted hammock
  Plunges, away from the shark,
Down, a thousand fathoms,
  Down into the dark!

HENRY HOWARD BROWNELL

A thousand summers and winters
The stormy Gulf shall roll
High o'er his canvas coffin;
But, silence to doubt and dole:—
There's a quiet harbor somewhere
For the poor aweary soul.

Free the fettered engine,
Speed the tireless shaft,
Loose to'gallant and topsail,
The breeze is fair abaft!

Blue sea all around us,
Blue sky bright o'erhead—
Every man to his duty,
We have buried our dead!

MARGARET JUNKIN PRESTON

1820–1897

113. *The Hero of the Commune*

GARÇON! You — *you*
Snarled along with this cursëd crew?
(Only a child, and yet so bold,
Scarcely as much as ten years old!)

Do you hear? do you know
Why the gendarmes put you there, in the row,
You, with those Commune wretches tall,
With your face to the wall? "

"*Know?* To be sure I know! why not?
We're here to be shot;
And there, by the pillar's the very spot,
Fighting for France, my father fell:
Ah, well!
That's just the way *I* would choose to fall,
With my back to the wall!"

("Sacré! Fair, open fight, I say,
Is something right gallant in its way,
And fine for warming the blood; but who
Wants wolfish work like this to do?
Bah! 't is a butcher's business!) *How?*
(The boy is beckoning to me now:
I knew that his poor child's heart would fail,
. . . Yet his cheek's not pale:)
Quick! say your say, for don't you see,
When the church-clock yonder tolls out *Three*,
You 're all to be shot?
. . . *What?*
'*Excuse you one moment?*' O, ho, ho!
Do you think to fool a gendarme so?"

"But, sir, here 's a watch that a friend, one day
(My father's friend), just over the way,
Lent me; and if you'll let me free,
— It still lacks seven minutes of *Three*, —
I 'll come, on the word of a soldier's son,
Straight back into line, when my errand's done."

"Ha, ha! No doubt of it! Off! Begone!
(Now, good Saint Denis, speed him on!
The work will be easier since *he*'s saved;
For I hardly see how I could have braved

The ardor of that innocent eye,
As he stood and heard,
While I gave the word,
Dooming him like a dog to die.")

"In time! Well, thanks, that my desire
Was granted; and now, I am ready: — Fire!
One word! — that's all!
— You 'll let me turn my *back* to the wall? "

"Parbleu! Come out of the line, I say,
Come out! (who said that his name was *Ney?*)
Ha! France will hear of him yet one day! "

ALICE CARY

1820–1871

114. *An Order for a Picture*

OH, good painter, tell me true,
Has your hand the cunning to draw
Shapes of things that you never saw?
Aye? Well, here is an order for you.

Woods and corn fields, a little brown, —
The picture must not be over-bright, —
Yet all in the golden and gracious light
Of a cloud, when the summer sun is down.
Alway and alway, night and morn,
Woods upon woods, with fields of corn
Lying between them, not quite sere,

And not in the full thick leafy bloom,
When the wind can hardly find breathing room
Under their tassels, — cattle near,
Biting shorter the short green grass,
And a hedge of sumach and sassafras,
With bluebirds twittering all around, —
(Ah, good painter, you can't paint sand!)
These, and the house where I was born,
Low and little, and black and old,
With children, many as it can hold,
All at the windows open wide, —
Heads and shoulders clear outside,
And fair young faces all ablush:
Perhaps you may have seen, some day,
Roses crowding the self-same way,
Out of a wilding wayside bush.

Listen closer. When you have done
With woods and corn fields and grazing herds,
A lady, the loveliest ever the sun
Looked down upon you must paint for me.
Oh, if I only could make you see
The clear blue eyes, the tender smile,
The sovereign sweetness, the gentle grace,
The woman's soul, and the angel's face
That are beaming on me all the while,
I need not speak these foolish words.
Yet one word tells you all I would say, —
She is my mother: you will agree
That all the rest may be thrown away.

Two little urchins at her knee
You must paint, Sir: one like me, —
The other with a clearer brow,
And the light of his adventurous eyes
Flashing with boldest enterprise:
At ten years old he went to sea, —
God knoweth if he be living now, —
He sailed in the good ship *Commodore*,
Nobody ever crossed her track
To bring us news and she never came back.
Ah, it's twenty long years and more
Since that old ship went out of the bay
With my great-hearted brother on her deck:
I watched him till he shrank to a speck,
And his face was toward me all the way —
Bright his hair was, a golden brown,
The time we stood at our mother's knee:
That beauteous head, if it did go down,
Carried sunshine into the sea.

Out in the fields one summer night
We were together, half afraid
Of the corn-leaves' rustling and of the shade
Of the high hills, stretching so still and far, —
Loitering till after the low little light
Of the candle shone through the open door,
And over the hay-stack's pointed top,
All of a tremble and ready to drop,
The first half hour, the great yellow star,
That we with staring ignorant eyes
Had often and often watched to see
Propped and held in its place in the skies

By the fork of a tall red mulberry tree,
Which close to the edge of our flax-field grew, —
Dead at the top, — just one branch full
Of leaves, notched round and lined with wool,
From which it tenderly shook the dew
Over our heads, when we came to play
In its hand-breadth of shadow day after day —
Afraid to go home, sir; for one of us bare
A nest full of speckled and thin-shelled eggs, —
The other, a bird held fast by the legs,
Not so big as a straw of wheat.
The berries we gave her she wouldn't eat,
But cried and cried, till we held her bill
So slim and shining, to keep her still.

At last we stood at our mother's knee.
Do you think, sir, if you try,
You can paint the look of a lie?
If you can, pray have the grace
To put it solely in the face
Of the urchin that is likest me:
I think 'twas sole'y mine, indeed:
But that's no matter, — paint it so;
The eyes of our mother (take good heed)
Looking not on the nestful of eggs,
Nor the fluttering bird held so fast by the legs,
But straight through our faces down to our lies,
And, oh, with such injured, reproachful surprise!
I felt my heart bleed where that glance went, as though
A sharp blade went through it.

You, sir, know
That you on the canvas are to repeat
Things that are fairest, things most sweet, —
Woods and corn fields and mulberry tree, —
The mother, — the lads with their bird at her knee:
But oh, that look of reproachful woe!
High as the heavens your name I'll shout,
If you paint me the picture and leave that out.

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ

1822–1872

115. *Drifting*

MY soul to-day
Is far away,
Sailing the Vesuvian Bay;
My wingëd boat,
A bird afloat,
Swings round the purple peaks remote: —

Round purple peaks
It sails, and seeks
Blue inlets and their crystal creeks,
Where high rocks throw,
Through deeps below,
A duplicated golden glow.

Far, vague, and dim,
The mountains swim;
While on Vesuvius' misty brim,

With outstretched hands,
The gray smoke stands
O'erlooking the volcanic lands.

Here Ischia smiles
O'er liquid miles;
And yonder, bluest of the isles,
Calm Capri waits,
Her sapphire gates
Beguiling to her bright estates.

I heed not, if
My rippling skiff
Float swift or slow from cliff to cliff;
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise.

Under the walls
Where swells and falls
The Bay's deep breast at intervals
At peace I lie,
Blown softly by,
A cloud upon this liquid sky.

The day, so mild,
Is Heaven's own child,
With Earth and Ocean reconciled;
The airs I feel
Around me steal
Are murmuring to the murmuring keel.

Over the rail
My hand I trail
Within the shadow of the sail,
A joy intense,
The cooling sense
Glides down my drowsy indolence.

With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Where Summer sings and never dies, —
O'erveiled with vines
She glows and shines
Among her future oil and wines.

Her children, hid
The cliffs amid,
Are gambolling with the gambolling kid;
Or down the walls,
With tipsy calls,
Laugh on the rocks like waterfalls.

The fisher's child,
With tresses wild,
Unto the smooth, bright sand beguiled,
With glowing lips
Sings as she skips,
Or gazes at the far-off ships.

Yon deep bark goes
Where traffic blows,
From lands of sun to lands of snows;

This happier one,—
Its course is run
From lands of snow to lands of sun.

O happy ship,
To rise and dip,
With the blue crystal at your lip!
O happy crew,
My heart with you
Sails, and sails, and sings anew!

No more, no more
The worldly shore
Upbraids me with its loud uproar:
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise!

116. *Sheridan's Ride*

UP from the South at break of day,
Bringing to Winchester fresh dismay,
The affrighted air with a shudder bore,
Like a herald in haste, to the chieftain's door,
The terrible grumble, and rumble, and roar,
Telling the battle was on once more,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

And wider still those billows of war,
Thundered along the horizon's bar;
And louder yet into Winchester rolled

The roar of that red sea uncontrolled,
Making the blood of the listener cold,
As he thought of the stake in that fiery fray,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

But there is a road from Winchester town,
A good, broad highway leading down;
And there, through the flush of the morning light,
A steed as black as the steeds of night,
Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight,
As if he knew the terrible need;
He stretched away with his utmost speed;
Hills rose and fell; but his heart was gay,
With Sheridan fifteen miles away.

Still sprung from those swift hoofs, thundering South,
The dust, like smoke from the cannon's mouth;
Or the trail of a comet, sweeping faster and faster,
Foreboding to traitors the doom of disaster.
The heart of the steed, and the heart of the master
Were beating like prisoners assaulting their walls,
Impatient to be where the battle-field calls;
Every nerve of the charger was strained to full play,
With Sheridan only ten miles away.

Under his spurning feet the road
Like an arrowy Alpine river flowed,
And the landscape sped away behind
Like an ocean flying before the wind,
And the steed, like a barque fed with furnace ire,

Swept on, with his wild eyes full of fire.
But lo! he is nearing his heart's desire;
He is snuffing the smoke of the roaring fray,
With Sheridan only five miles away.

The first that the general saw were the groups
Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops;
What was done? what to do? a glance told him both,
Then, striking his spurs, with a terrible oath,
He dashed down the line 'mid a storm of huzzas,
And the wave of retreat checked its course there, because
The sight of the master compelled it to pause.
With foam and with dust the black charger was gray;
By the flash of his eye, and the red nostril's play,
He seemed to the whole great army to say,
"I have brought you Sheridan all the way
From Winchester, down to save the day!"

Hurrah! hurrah for Sheridan!
Hurrah! hurrah for horse and man!
And when their statues are placed on high,
Under the dome of the Union sky,
The American soldier's Temple of Fame;
There with the glorious general's name,
Be it said, in letters both bold and bright,
"Here is the steed that saved the day,
By carrying Sheridan into the fight,
From Winchester, twenty miles away!"

FRANCIS ORRERY TICKNOR

1822–1874

117. *Little Giffen*

OUT of the focal and foremost fire,
Out of the hospital walls as dire;
Smitten of grape-shot and gangrene,
(Eighteenth battle, and *he* sixteen!)
Spectre! such as you seldom see,
Little Giffen, of Tennessee!

"Take him and welcome!" the surgeons said;
Little the doctor can help the dead!
So we took him; and brought him where
The balm was sweet in the summer air;
And we laid him down on a wholesome bed,—
Utter Lazarus, heel to head!

And we watched the war with abated breath,—
Skeleton Boy against skeleton Death.
Months of torture, how many such?
Weary weeks of the stick and crutch;
And still a glint of the steel-blue eye
Told of a spirit that wouldn't die,

And didn't. Nay, more! in death's despite
The crippled skeleton "learned to write."
"Dear mother," at first, of course; and then
"Dear captain," inquiring about the men.
Captain's answer: "Of eighty-and-five,
Giffen and I are left alive."

Word of gloom from the war, one day;
Johnson pressed at the front, they say.
Little Giffen was up and away;
A tear — his first — as he bade good-by,
Dimmed the glint of his steel-blue eye.
"I'll write, if spared!" There was news of the fight;
But none of Giffen. — He did not write.

I sometimes fancy that, were I king
Of the princely Knights of the Golden Ring,
With the song of the minstrel in mine ear,
And the tender legend that trembles here,
I'd give the best on his bended knee,
The whitest soul of my chivalry,
For "Little Giffen," of Tennessee.

GEORGE HENRY BOKER

1823–1890

118. *Dirge for a Soldier*

CLOSE his eyes; his work is done!
What to him is friend or foeman,
Rise of moon, or set of sun,
Hand of man, or kiss of woman?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

As man may, he fought his fight,
  Proved his truth by his endeavor;
Let him sleep in solemn night,
  Sleep forever and forever.
    Lay him low, lay him low,
    In the clover or the snow!
    What cares he? he cannot know:
      Lay him low!

Fold him in his country's stars,
  Roll the drum and fire the volley!
What to him are all our wars,
  What but death bemocking folly?
    Lay him low, lay him low,
    In the clover or the snow!
    What cares he? he cannot know:
      Lay him low!

Leave him to God's watching eye,
  Trust him to the hand that made him.
Mortal love weeps idly by:
  God alone has power to aid him.
    Lay him low, lay him low,
    In the clover or the snow!
    What cares he? he cannot know:
      Lay him low!

119. *The Ferry*

THERE was a gay maiden lived down by the mill, —
  Ferry me over the ferry, —
Her hair was as bright as the waves of a rill,
When the sun on the brink of his setting stands still,
  Her lips were as full as a cherry.

A stranger came galloping over the hill, —
  Ferry me over the ferry, —
He gave her broad silver and gold for his will:
She glanced at the stranger, she glanced o'er the sill;
  The maiden was gentle and merry.

"O! what would you give for your virtue again? " —
  Ferry me over the ferry, —
"O! silver and gold on your lordship I 'd rain,
I'd double your pleasure, I'd double my pain,
  This moment forever to bury."

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

1823–1911

120. *Decoration*

MID the flower-wreathed tombs I stand
  Bearing lilies in my hand.
Comrades! in what soldier-grave
Sleeps the bravest of the brave?

Is it he who sank to rest
With his colors round his breast?
Friendship makes his tomb a shrine;
Garlands veil it: ask not mine.

One low grave, yon trees beneath,
Bears no roses, wears no wreath;
Yet no heart more high and warm
Ever dared the battle-storm,

Never gleamed a prouder eye
In the front of victory,
Never foot had firmer tread
On the field where hope lay dead,

Than are hid within this tomb,
Where the untended grasses bloom,
And no stone, with feigned distress,
Mocks the sacred loneliness.

Youth and beauty, dauntless will,
Dreams that life could ne'er fulfil,
Here lie buried; here in peace
Wrongs and woes have found release.

Turning from my comrades' eyes,
Kneeling where a woman lies,
I strew lilies on the grave
Of the bravest of the brave.

121. *"Since Cleopatra Died"*

"SINCE Cleopatra died!" Long years are past,
In Antony's fancy, since the deed was done.
Love counts its epochs, not from sun to sun,
But by the heart-throb. Mercilessly fast
Time has swept onward since she looked her last
On life, a queen. For him the sands have run
Whole ages through their glass, and kings have won
And lost their empires o'er earth's surface vast

Since Cleopatra died. Ah! Love and Pain
Make their own measure of all things that be.
No clock's slow ticking marks their deathless strain;
The life they own is not the life we see;
Love's single moment is eternity:
Eternity, a thought in Shakespeare's brain.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

1824–1892

122. *Ebb and Flow*

I WALKED beside the evening sea,
And dreamed a dream that could not be;
The waves that plunged along the shore
Said only — "Dreamer, dream no more!"

But still the legions charged the beach;
Loud rang their battle-cry, like speech;
But changed was the imperial strain:
It murmured — "Dreamer, dream again!"

I homeward turned from out the gloom, —
That sound I heard not in my room;
But suddenly a sound, that stirred
Within my very breast, I heard.

It was my heart, that like a sea
Within my breast beat ceaselessly:
But like the waves along the shore,
It said — "Dream on!" and "Dream no more!"

BAYARD TAYLOR

1825–1875

123. *Bedouin Song*

FROM the Desert I come to thee
On a stallion shod with fire;
And the winds are left behind
In the speed of my desire.
Under thy window I stand,
And the midnight hears my cry:
I love thee, I love but thee,
With a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment
Book unfold!

Look from thy window and see
My passion and my pain;
I lie on the sands below,
And I faint in thy disdain.
Let the night-winds touch thy brow
With the heat of my burning sigh,
And melt thee to hear the vow
Of a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment
Book unfold!

My steps are nightly driven,
By the fever in my breast,
To hear from thy lattice breathed
The word that shall give me rest.
Open the door of thy heart,
And open thy chamber door,
And my kisses shall teach thy lips
The love that shall fade no more
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment
Book unfold!

124. *The Song of the Camp*

"GIVE us a song!" the soldiers cried,
The outer trenches guarding,
When the heated guns of the camps allied
Grew weary of bombarding.

The dark Redan, in silent scoff,
Lay, grim and threatening, under;
And the tawny mound of the Malakoff
No longer belched its thunder.

There was a pause. A guardsman said,
"We storm the forts to-morrow;
Sing while we may, another day
Will bring enough of sorrow."

There lay along the battery's side,
Below the smoking cannon:
Brave hearts, from Severn and from Clyde,
And from the banks of Shannon.

They sang of love, and not of fame;
Forgot was Britain's glory:
Each heart recalled a different name,
But all sang "Annie Laurie."

Voice after voice caught up the song,
Until its tender passion
Rose like an anthem, rich and strong, —
Their battle-eve confession.

Dear girl, her name he dared not speak,
But, as the song grew louder,
Something upon the soldier's cheek
Washed off the stains of powder.

Beyond the darkening ocean burned
The bloody sunset's embers,
While the Crimean valleys learned
How English love remembers.

And once again a fire of hell
Rained on the Russian quarters,
With scream of shot, and burst of shell,
And bellowing of the mortars!

And Irish Nora's eyes are dim
For a singer, dumb and gory;
And English Mary mourns for him
Who sang of "Annie Laurie."

Sleep, soldiers! still in honored rest
Your truth and valor wearing:
The bravest are the tenderest, —
The loving are the daring.

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD

1825–1903

125. *Songs*

HOW are songs begot and bred?
How do golden measures flow?
From the heart, or from the head?
Happy Poet, let me know.

Tell me first how folded flowers
Bud and bloom in vernal bowers;
How the south wind shapes its tune,
The harper, he, of June.

None may answer, none may know,
Winds and flowers come and go,
And the selfsame canons bind
Nature and the Poet's mind.

126. *The Sky*

THE sky is a drinking-cup,
That was overturned of old,
And it pours in the eyes of men
Its wine of airy gold.

We drink that wine all day,
Till the last drop is drained up,
And are lighted off to bed
By the jewels in the cup!

127. *The Flight of Youth*

THERE are gains for all our losses,
There are balms for all our pain:
But when youth, the dream, departs,
It takes something from our hearts,
And it never comes again.

We are stronger, and are better,
Under manhood's sterner reign:
Still we feel that something sweet
Followed youth, with flying feet,
And will never come again.

Something beautiful is vanished,
And we sigh for it in vain:
We behold it everywhere,
On the earth, and in the air,
But it never comes again.

128. *Arab Song*

BREAK thou my heart, ah, break it,
If such thy pleasure be;
Thy will is mine, what say I?
'Tis more than mine to me.

And if my life offend thee,
My passion and my pain,
Take thou my life, ah, take it,
But spare me thy disdain!

129. *The Jar*

DAY and night my thoughts incline
To the blandishments of wine:
Jars were made to drain, I think,
Wine, I know, was made to drink.

When I die, (the day be far!)
Should the potters make a jar
Out of this poor clay of mine,
Let the jar be filled with wine!

WILLIAM HAINES LYTLE

1826–1863

130. *Antony to Cleopatra*

I AM dying, Egypt, dying!
Ebbs the crimson life-tide fast,
And the dark Plutonian shadows
Gather on the evening blast;
Let thine arm, O Queen, enfold me,
Hush thy sobs and bow thine ear,
Listen to the great heart secrets
Thou, and thou alone, must hear.

Though my scarred and veteran legions
Bear their eagles high no more,
And my wrecked and scattered galleys
Strew dark Actium's fatal shore;
Though no glittering guards surround me,
Prompt to do their master's will,
I must perish like a Roman,
Die the great Triumvir still.

Let not Cæsar's servile minions
Mock the lion thus laid low;
'Twas no foeman's arm that felled him,
'Twas his own that struck the blow:
His who, pillowed on thy bosom,
Turned aside from glory's ray —
His who, drunk with thy caresses,
Madly threw a world away.

Should the base plebeian rabble
Dare assail my name at Rome,
Where the noble spouse Octavia
Weeps within her widowed home,
Seek her; say the gods bear witness, —
Altars, augurs, circling wings, —
That her blood, with mine commingled,
Yet shall mount the thrones of kings.

And for thee, star-eyed Egyptian —
Glorious sorceress of the Nile!
Light the path to Stygian horrors,
With the splendor of thy smile;

Give the Cæsar crowns and arches,
Let his brow the laurel twine:
I can scorn the senate's triumphs,
Triumphing in love like thine.

I am dying, Egypt, dying!
Hark! the insulting foeman's cry;
They are coming — quick, my falchion!
Let me front them ere I die.
Ah, no more amid the battle
Shall my heart exulting swell;
Isis and Osiris guard thee —
Cleopatra — Rome — farewell!

WALTER MITCHELL

1826–1908

131. *Tacking Ship Off Shore*

THE weather-leech of the topsail shivers,
The bowlines strain, and the lee-shrouds slacken,
The braces are taut, the lithe boom quivers,
And the waves with the coming squall-cloud blacken.

Open one point on the weather-brow,
Is the light-house tall on Fire Island Head.
There's a shade of doubt on the captain's brow,
And the pilot watches the heaving lead.

I stand at the wheel, and with eager eye
To sea and to sky and to shore I gaze,
Till the muttered order of "Full and by!"
Is suddenly changed for "Full for stays!"

The ship bends lower before the breeze,
  As her broadside fair to the blast she lays;
And she swifter springs to the rising seas,
  As the pilot calls, "Stand by for stays!"

It is silence all, as each in his place,
  With the gathered coil in his hardened hands,
By tack and bowline, by sheet and brace,
  Waiting the watchword impatient stands.

And the light on Fire Island Head draws near,
  As, trumpet-winged, the pilot's shout
From his post on the bowsprit's heel I hear,
  With the welcome call of "Ready! About!"

No time to spare! It is touch and go;
  And the captain growls, "Down helm! hard down!"
As my weight on the whirling spokes I throw,
  While heaven grows black with the storm-cloud's frown.

High o'er the knight-heads flies the spray,
  As we meet the shock of the plunging sea;
And my shoulder stiff to the wheel I lay,
  As I answer, "Ay, ay, sir! Ha-a-rd a-lee!"

With the swerving leap of a startled steed
  The ship flies fast in the eye of the wind,
The dangerous shoals on the lee recede,
  And the headland white we have left behind.

The topsails flutter, the jibs collapse,
  And belly and tug at the groaning cleats;
The spanker slats, and the mainsail flaps;
  And thunders the order, "Tacks and sheets!"

Mid the rattle of blocks and the tramp of the crew,
Hisses the rain of the rushing squall:
The sails are aback from clew to clew,
And now is the moment for "Mainsail, haul!"

And the heavy yards, like a baby's toy,
By fifty strong arms are swiftly swung:
She holds her way, and I look with joy
For the first white spray o'er the bulwarks flung.

"Let go, and haul!" 'Tis the last command,
And the head-sails fill to the blast once more:
Astern and to leeward lies the land,
With its breakers white on the shingly shore.

What matters the reef, or the rain, or the squall?
I steady the helm for the open sea;
The first mate clamors, "Belay, there, all!"
And the captain's breath once more comes free.

And so off shore let the good ship fly;
Little care I how the gusts may blow,
In my fo'castle bunk, in a jacket dry.
Eight bells have struck, and my watch is below.

STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER

1826–1864

132. *My Old Kentucky Home,*

THE sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home;
'Tis summer, the darkeys are gay;
The corn-top's ripe, and the meadow's in the bloom,
While the birds make music all the day.

The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
All merry, all happy and bright;
By-'n'-by hard times comes a-knocking at the door:—
Then my old Kentucky home, good-night!

Weep no more, my lady,
O, weep no more to-day!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home,
For the old Kentucky home, far away.

They hunt no more for the possum and the coon,
On the meadow, the hill, and the shore;
They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon,
On the bench by the old cabin door.
The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,
With sorrow, where all was delight;
The time has come when the darkeys have to part:—
Then my old Kentucky home, good-night!

The head must bow, and the back will have to bend,
Wherever the darkey may go;
A few more days, and the trouble all will end,
In the field where the sugar-canes grow.
A few more days for to tote the weary load,—
No matter, 'twill never be light;
A few more days till we totter on the road:—
Then my old Kentucky home, good-night!

Weep no more, my lady,
O, weep no more to-day!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home,
For the old Kentucky home, far away.

133. *Old Folks at Home*

WAY down upon de Swanee Ribber,
Far, far away,
Dere's wha my heart is turning ebber,
Dere's wha de old folks stay.
All up and down de whole creation
Sadly I roam,
Still longing for de old plantation,
And for de old folks at home.

All de world am sad and dreary,
Eberywhere I roam;
Oh, darkeys, how my heart grows weary,
Far from de old folks at home!

All round de little farm I wandered
When I was young,
Den many happy days I squandered,
Many de songs I sung.
When I was playing wid my brudder
Happy was I;
Oh, take me to my kind old mudder!
Dere let me live and die.

One little hut among de bushes,
One dat I love,
Still sadly to my memory rushes,
No matter where I rove.
When will I see de bees a-humming
All round de comb?
When will I hear de banjo tumming,
Down in my good old home?

All de world am sad and dreary,
Eberywhere I roam,
Oh, darkeys, how my heart grows weary,
Far from de old folks at home!

134. *Massa's in de Cold Ground*

ROUND de meadows am a-ringing
De darkeys' mournful song,
While de mocking-bird am singing,
Happy as de day am long.
Where de ivy am a-creeping,
O'er de grassy mound,
Dere old massa am a-sleeping,
Sleeping in de cold, cold ground.

Down in de corn-field
Hear dat mournful sound:
All de darkeys am a-weeping, —
Massa's in de cold, cold ground.

When de autumn leaves were falling,
When de days were cold,
'Twas hard to hear old massa calling,
Cayse he was so weak and old.
Now de orange tree am blooming
On de sandy shore,
Now de summer days am coming, —
Massa nebber calls no more.

Massa make de darkeys love him,
Cayse he was so kind;
Now dey sadly weep above him,
Mourning cayse he leave dem behind.
I cannot work before to-morrow,
Cayse de tear-drop flow;
I try to drive away my sorrow,
Pickin' on de old banjo.

Down in de corn-field
Hear dat mournful sound:
All de darkeys am a-weeping, —
Massa's in de cold, cold ground.

LUCY LARCOM

1826–1893

135. *A Strip of Blue*

I DO not own an inch of land,
But all I see is mine, —
The orchard and the mowing-fields,
The lawns and gardens fine.
The winds my tax-collectors are,
They bring me tithes divine, —
Wild scents and subtle essences,
A tribute rare and free;
And, more magnificent than all,
My window keeps for me
A glimpse of blue immensity, —
A little strip of sea.

Richer am I than he who owns
  Great fleets and argosies;
I have a share in every ship
  Won by the inland breeze,
To loiter on yon airy road
  Above the apple-trees.
I freight them with my untold dreams;
  Each bears my own picked crew;
And nobler cargoes wait for them
  Than ever India knew, —
My ships that sail into the East
  Across that outlet blue.

Sometimes they seem like living shapes, —
  The people of the sky, —
Guests in white raiment coming down
  From heaven, which is close by;
I call them by familiar names,
  As one by one draws nigh.
So white, so light, so spirit-like,
  From violet mists they bloom!
The aching wastes of the unknown
  Are half reclaimed from gloom,
Since on life's hospitable sea
  All souls find sailing-room.

The ocean grows a weariness
  With nothing else in sight;
Its east and west, its north and south,
  Spread out from morn till night;
We miss the warm, caressing shore,
  Its brooding shade and light.

A part is greater than the whole;
By hints are mysteries told.
The fringes of eternity, —
God's sweeping garment-fold,
In that bright shred of glittering sea,
I reach out for and hold.

The sails, like flakes of roseate pearl,
Float in upon the mist;
The waves are broken precious stones, —
Sapphire and amethyst
Washed from celestial basement walls,
By suns unsetting kist.
Out through the utmost gates of space,
Past where the gray stars drift,
To the widening Infinite, my soul
Glides on, a vessel swift,
Yet loses not her anchorage
In yonder azure rift.

Here sit I, as a little child;
The threshold of God's door
Is that clear band of chrysoprase;
Now the vast temple floor,
The binding glory of the dome
I bow my head before.
Thy universe, O God, is home,
In height or depth, to me;
Yet here upon thy footstool green
Content am I to be;
Glad when is oped unto by need
Some sea-like glimpse of Thee.

FRANCIS MILES FINCH

1827–1907

136. *The Blue and the Gray*

BY the flow of the inland river,
Whence the fleets of iron have fled,
Where the blades of the grave-grass quiver,
Asleep are the ranks of the dead:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the one, the Blue,
Under the other, the Gray.

These in the robings of glory,
Those in the gloom of defeat,
All with the battle-blood gory,
In the dusk of eternity meet:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the laurel, the Blue,
Under the willow, the Gray.

From the silence of sorrowful hours
The desolate mourners go,
Lovingly laden with flowers
Alike for the friend and the foe:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the roses, the Blue,
Under the lilies, the Gray.

So with an equal splendor,
The morning sun-rays fall,
With a touch impartially tender,
On the blossoms blooming for all:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Broidered with gold, the Blue,
Mellowed with gold, the Gray.

So, when the summer calleth,
On forest and field of grain,
With an equal murmur falleth
The cooling drip of the rain:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Wet with the rain, the Blue,
Wet with the rain, the Gray.

Sadly, but not with upbraiding,
The generous deed was done,
In the storm of the years that are fading
No braver battle was won:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the blossoms, the Blue,
Under the garlands, the Gray.

No more shall the war cry sever,
Or the winding rivers be red;
They banish our anger forever
When they laurel the graves of our dead!

FRANCIS MILES FINCH

Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Love and tears for the Blue,
Tears and love for the Gray.

JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE

1827–1916

137. *Midwinter*

THE speckled sky is dim with snow,
The light flakes falter and fall slow;
Athwart the hill-top, rapt and pale,
Silently drops a silvery veil;
And all the valley is shut in
By flickering curtains gray and thin.

But cheerily the chickadee
Singeth to me on fence and tree;
The snow sails round him as he sings,
White as the down of angels' wings.

I watch the slow flakes as they fall
On bank and brier and broken wall;
Over the orchard, waste and brown,
All noiselessly they settle down,
Tipping the apple-boughs, and each
Light quivering twig of plum and peach.

On turf and curb and bower-roof
The snow-storm spreads its ivory woof;

It paves with pearl the garden-walk;
And lovingly round tattered stalk
And shivering stem its magic weaves
A mantle fair as lily-leaves.

The hooded beehive, small and low,
Stands like a maiden in the snow;
And the old door-slab is half hid
Under an alabaster lid.

All day it snows: the sheeted post
Gleams in the dimness like a ghost;
All day the blasted oak has stood
A muffled wizard of the wood;
Garland and airy cap adorn
The sumach and the wayside thorn,
And clustering spangles lodge and shine
In the dark tresses of the pine.

The ragged bramble, dwarfed and old,
Shrinks like a beggar in the cold;
In surplice white the cedar stands,
And blesses him with priestly hands.

Still cheerily the chickadee
Singeth to me on fence and tree:
But in my inmost ear is heard
The music of a holier bird;
And heavenly thoughts as soft and white
As snow-flakes, on my soul alight,
Clothing with love my lonely heart,
Healing with peace each bruisëd part,
Till all my being seems to be
Transfigured by their purity.

JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE

138. *The Vagabonds*

WE are two travellers, Roger and I.
Roger's my dog. — Come here, you scamp!
Jump for the gentleman, — mind your eye!
Over the table, — look out for the lamp!
The rogue is growing a little old;
Five years we've tramped through wind and weather,
And slept out-doors when nights were cold,
And ate and drank — and starved — together.

We've learned what comfort is, I tell you!
A bed on the floor, a bit of rosin,
A fire to thaw our thumbs (poor fellow!
The paw he holds up there's been frozen),
Plenty of catgut for my fiddle
(This out-door business is bad for strings),
Then a few nice buckwheats hot from the griddle,
And Roger and I set up for kings!

No, thank ye, Sir, — I never drink;
Roger and I are exceedingly moral, —
Aren't we, Roger? — See him wink! —
Well, something hot, then, — we won't quarrel.
He's thirsty, too, — see him nod his head?
What a pity, Sir, that dogs can't talk!
He understands every word that's said, —
And he knows good milk from water-and-chalk.

The truth is, Sir, now I reflect,
I've been so sadly given to grog,
I wonder I've not lost the respect
(Here's to you, Sir!) even of my dog.

But he sticks by, through thick and thin;
And this old coat, with its empty pockets,
And rags that smell of tobacco and gin,
He'll follow while he has eyes in his sockets.

There isn't another creature living
Would do it, and prove, through every disaster,
So fond, so faithful, and so forgiving,
To such a miserable, thankless master!
No, Sir! — see him wag his tail and grin!
By George! it makes my old eyes water!
That is, there's something in this gin
That chokes a fellow. But no matter!

We'll have some music, if you're willing,
And Roger (hem! what a plague a cough is, Sir!)
Shall march a little — Start, you villain!
Paws up! Eyes front! Salute your officer!
'Bout face! Attention! Take your rifle!
(Some dogs have arms, you see!) Now hold your
Cap while the gentlemen give a trifle,
To aid a poor old patriot soldier!

March! Halt! Now show how the rebel shakes
When he stands up to hear his sentence.
Now tell us how many drams it takes
To honour a jolly new acquaintance.
Five yelps, — that's five; he's mighty knowing!
The night's before us, fill the glasses! —
Quick, Sir! I'm ill, — my brain is going! —
Some brandy, — thank you, — there! — it passes!

Why not reform? That's easily said;
  But I've gone through such wretched treatment,
Sometimes forgetting the taste of bread,
  And scarce remembering what meat meant,
That my poor stomach's past reform;
  And there are times when, mad with thinking,
I'd sell out heaven for something warm
  To prop a horrible inward sinking.

Is there a way to forget to think?
  At your age, Sir, home, fortune, friends,
A dear girl's love, — but I took to drink, —
  The same old story; you know how it ends.
If you could have seen these classic features, —
  You needn't laugh, Sir; they were not then
Such a burning libel on God's creatures:
  I was one of your handsome men!

If you had seen *her*, so fair and young,
  Whose head was happy on this breast!
If you could have heard the songs I sung
  When the wine went round, you wouldn't have guessed
That ever I, Sir, should be straying
  From door to door, with fiddle and dog,
Ragged and penniless, and playing
  To you to-night for a glass of grog!

She's married since, — a parson's wife:
  'Twas better for her that we should part, —
Better the soberest, prosiest life
  Than a blasted home and a broken heart.

I have seen her? Once: I was weak and spent
On the dusty road: a carriage stopped:
But little she dreamed, as on she went,
Who kissed the coin that her fingers dropped!

You've set me talking, Sir; I'm sorry;
It makes me wild to think of the change!
What do you care for a beggar's story?
Is it amusing? You find it strange?
I had a mother so proud of me!
'Twas well she died before. Do you know
If the happy spirits in heaven can see
The ruin and wretchedness here below?

Another glass, and strong, to deaden
This pain; then Roger and I will start.
I wonder, has he such a lumpish, leaden
Aching thing in place of a heart?
He is sad sometimes, and would weep, if he could,
No doubt remembering things that were, —
A virtuous kennel with plenty of food,
And himself a sober, respectable cur.

I'm better now; that glass was warming. —
You rascal! limber your lazy feet!
We must be fiddling and performing
For supper and bed, or starve in the street.
Not a very gay life we lead, you think?
But soon we shall go where lodgings are free,
And the sleepers need neither victuals nor drink: —
The sooner the better for Roger and me!

139. *Midsummer*

AROUND this lovely valley rise
The purple hills of Paradise —

O, softly on yon banks of haze
Her rosy face the Summer lays!

Becalmed along the azure sky,
The argosies of cloudland lie,
Whose shores, with many a shining rift,
Far off their pearl-white pearls uplift.

Through all the long midsummer-day
The meadow-sides are sweet with hay.
I seek the coolest sheltered seat,
Just where the field and forest meet, —
Where grow the pine-trees tall and bland,
The ancient oaks austere and grand,
And fringy roots and pebbles fret
The ripples of the rivulet.

I watch the mowers, as they go
Through the tall grass, a white-sleeved row.
With even stroke their scythes they swing,
In tune their merry whetstones ring.
Behind the nimble youngsters run,
And toss the thick swarths in the sun.
The cattle graze, while, warm and still,
Slopes the broad pasture, basks the hill,
And bright, where summer breezes break,
The green wheat crinkles like a lake.

The butterfly and humblebee
Come to the pleasant woods with me;
Quickly before me runs the quail,
Her chickens skulk behind the rail;
High up the lone wood-pigeon sits,
And the woodpecker pecks and flits.
Sweet woodland music sinks and swells,
The brooklet rings its tinkling bells,
The swarming insects drone and hum,
The partridge beats its throbbing drum.
The squirrel leaps among the boughs,
And chatters in his leafy house.
The oriole flashes by; and, look!
Into the mirror of the brook,
Where the vain bluebird trims his coat,
Two tiny feathers fall and float.

As silently, as tenderly,
The down of peace descends on me.
O, this is peace! I have no need
Of friend to talk, of book to read:
A dear Companion here abides;
Close to my thrilling heart He hides;
The holy silence in His Voice:
I lie and listen, and rejoice.

ROSE TERRY COOKE

1827–1892

140. *Bluebeard's Closet*

FASTEN the chamber!
Hide the red key;
Cover the portal,
That eyes may not see.
Get thee to market,
To wedding and prayer;
Labor or revel,
The chamber is there!

In comes a stranger —
"Thy pictures how fine,
Titian or Guido,
Whose is the sign? "
Looks he behind them?
Ah! have a care!
"Here is a finer."
The chamber is there!

Fair spreads the banquet,
Rich the array;
See the bright torches
Mimicking day;
When harp and viol
Thrill the soft air,
Comes a light whisper:
The chamber is there!

Marble and painting,
Jasper and gold,
Purple from Tyrus,
Fold upon fold,
Blossoms and jewels,
Thy palace prepare:
Pale grows the monarch;
The chamber is there!

Once it was open
As shore to the sea;
White were the turrets,
Goodly to see;
All through the casements
Flowed the sweet air;
Now it is darkness;
The chamber is there!

Silence and horror
Brood on the walls;
Through every crevice
A little voice calls:
"Quicken, mad footsteps,
On pavement and stair;
Look not behind thee,
The chamber is there!"

Out of the gateway,
Through the wide world,
Into the tempest
Beaten and hurled,

Vain is thy wandering,
Sure thy despair,
Flying or staying,
The chamber is there!

141. *Segovia and Madrid*

IT sings to me in sunshine,
It whispers all day long,
My heartache like an echo
Repeats the wistful song:
Only a quaint old love-lilt,
Wherein my life is hid,—
"My body is in Segovia,
But my soul is in Madrid!"

I dream, and wake, and wonder,
For dream and day are one,
Alight with vanished faces,
And days forever done.
They smile and shine around me
As long ago they did;
For my body is in Segovia,
But my soul is in Madrid!

Through inland hills and forests
I hear the ocean breeze,
The creak of straining cordage,
The rush of mighty seas,

The lift of angry billows
Through which a swift keel slid;
For my body is in Segovia,
But my soul is in Madrid.

O fair-haired little darlings
Who bore my heart away!
A wide and woful ocean
Between us roars to-day;
Yet am I close beside you
Though time and space forbid;
My body is in Segovia,
But my soul is in Madrid.

If I were once in heaven,
There would be no more sea;
My heart would cease to wander,
My sorrows cease to be;
My sad eyes sleep forever,
In dust and daisies hid,
And my body leave Segovia.
— Would my soul forget Madrid?

GEORGE PERRY

1828–1888

142. *Siva, Destroyer*

WHOSE voice shall say him nay?
Whose arm shall bar the way?
Lord of unbounded sway! —
Siva, Destroyer.

Proud kings, whose lightest breath
To men is life or death,
Heeds he your ruth or wrath? —
Siva, Destroyer.

Mother with bleeding breast
Bowed o'er thy birdling's nest,
Shall thy last woe arrest
Siva, Destroyer?

Maiden with eyes of love
Fixed on the heaven above,
Hast thou a prayer to move
Siva, Destroyer?

Youth of the lion heart,
Brave for life's noblest act,
Shall fame's fair glory thwart
Siva, Destroyer?

Earth in thy sweet array,
Bride of celestial day,
Hast thou one bloom to stay
Siva, Destroyer?

Stars on the dome of night,
Climbing to your far height,
Do ye escape his night? —
Siva, Destroyer.

What voice shall say him nay,
What arm shall bar his way,
Lord of unbounded sway! —
Siva, Destroyer.

JEREMIAH EAMES RANKIN

1828–1904

143. *The Word of God to Leyden Came*

THE word of God to Leyden came,
Dutch town by Zuyder-Zee;
Rise up, my children of no name,
My kings and priests to be.
There is an empire in the West,
Which I will soon unfold;
A thousand harvests in her breast,
Rocks ribbed with iron and gold.

Rise up, my children, time is ripe!
Old things are passed away.
Bishops and kings from earth I wipe:
Too long they've had their day.
A little ship have I prepared
To bear you o'er the seas;
And in your souls, my will declared,
Shall grow by slow degrees.

Beneath my throne the martyrs cry:
I hear their voice, How long?
It mingles with their praises high,
And with their victor song.
The thing they longed and waited for,
But died without the sight;
So, this shall be! I wrong abhor,
The world I'll now set right.

Leave, then, the hammer and the loom,
You've other work to do;
For Freedom's commonwealth there's room,
And you shall build it too.
I'm tired of bishops and their pride,
I'm tired of kings as well;
Henceforth I take the people's side,
And with the people dwell.

Tear off the mitre from the priest,
And from the king, his crown;
Let all my captives be released;
Lift up, who men cast down.
Their pastors let the people choose,
And choose their rulers too;
Whom they select, I'll not refuse,
But bless the work they do.

The Pilgrims rose, at this God's word,
And sailed the wintry seas:
With their own flesh nor blood conferred,
Nor thought of wealth or ease.
They left the towers of Leyden town,
They left the Zuyder-Zee;
And where they cast their anchor down,
Rose Freedom's realm to be.

GUY HUMPHREYS McMASTER

1829–1887

144. *Carmen Bellicosum*

IN their ragged regimentals,
Stood the old Continentals,
Yielding not,
While the grenadiers were lunging,
And like hail fell the plunging
Cannon-shot;
When the files
Of the isles,
From the smoky night-encampment, bore the banner of the rampant
Unicorn;
And grummer, grummer, grummer, rolled the roll of the drummer
Through the morn!

Then with eyes to the front all,
And with guns horizontal,
Stood our sires;
While the balls whistled deadly,
And in streams flashing redly
Blazed the fires:
As the roar
On the shore
Swept the strong battle-breakers o'er the green-sodded acres
Of the plain;
And louder, louder, louder, cracked the black gunpowder,
Cracking amain!

Now like smiths at their forges
Worked the red St. George's
Cannoneers,
And the villainous saltpetre
Rang a fierce, discordant metre
Round our ears:
As the swift
Storm-drift,
With hot sweeping anger, came the horse-guards' clangor
On our flanks.
Then higher, higher, higher, burned the old-fashioned fire
Through the ranks!

Then the bare-headed Colonel
Galloped through the white infernal
Powder-cloud;
And his broadsword was swinging,
And his brazen throat was ringing
Trumpet-loud;
Then the blue
Bullets flew,
And the trooper-jackets redden at the touch of the leaden
Rifle-breath;
And rounder, rounder, rounder, roared the iron six-pounder,
Hurling death!

145. *Quatorzain*

MOST men know love but as a part of life;
They hide it in some corner of the breast,
Even from themselves; and only when they rest
In the brief pauses of that daily strife,
Wherewith the world might else be not so rife,
They draw it forth (as one draws forth a toy
To soothe some ardent, kiss-exacting boy)
And hold it up to sister, child, or wife.
Ah me! why may not love and life be one?
Why walk we thus alone, when by our side,
Love, like a visible god, might be our guide?
How would the marts grow noble! and the street,
Worn like a dungeon-floor by weary feet,
Seem then a golden court-way of the Sun!

146. *At Magnolia Cemetery*

SLEEP sweetly in your humble graves,
Sleep, martyrs of a fallen cause;
Though yet no marble column craves
The pilgrim here to pause.

In seeds of laurel in the earth
The blossom of your fame is blown,
And somewhere, waiting for its birth,
The shaft is in the stone!

Meanwhile, behalf the tardy years
  Which keep in trust your storied tombs,
Behold! your sisters bring their tears,
  And these memorial blooms.

Small tributes! but your shades will smile
  More proudly on these wreaths to-day,
Than when some cannon-moulded pile
  Shall overlook this bay.

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!
  There is no holier spot of ground
Than where defeated valor lies,
  By mourning beauty crowned.

147. *Charleston*

CALM as that second summer which precedes
  The first fall of the snow,
In the broad sunlight of heroic deeds,
  The city bides the foe.

As yet, behind their ramparts, stern and proud,
  Her bolted thunders sleep, —
Dark Sumter, like a battlemented cloud,
  Looms o'er the solemn deep.

No Calpe frowns from lofty cliff or scaur
  To guard the holy strand;
But Moultrie holds in leash her dogs of war
  Above the level sand.

And down the dunes a thousand guns lie couched,
Unseen, beside the flood, —
Like tigers in some Orient jungle crouched,
That wait and watch for blood.

Meanwhile, through streets still echoing with trade,
Walk grave and thoughtful men,
Whose hands may one day wield the patriot's blade
As lightly as the pen.

And maidens, with such eyes as would grow dim
Over a bleeding hound,
Seem each one to have caught the strength of him
Whose sword she sadly bound.

Thus girt without and garrisoned at home,
Day patient following day,
Old Charleston looks from roof and spire and dome,
Across her tranquil bay.

Ships, through a hundred foes, from Saxon lands
And spicy Indian ports,
Bring Saxon steel and iron to her hands,
And summer to her courts.

But still, along yon dim Atlantic line,
The only hostile smoke
Creeps like a harmless mist above the brine,
From some frail floating oak.

Shall the spring dawn, and she, still clad in smiles,
And with an unscathed brow,
Rest in the strong arms of her palm-crowned isles,
As fair and free as now?

We know not; in the temple of the Fates
God has inscribed her doom:
And, all untroubled in her faith, she waits
The triumph or the tomb.

S. WEIR MITCHELL 1829–1914

148. To a Magnolia Flower in the Garden of the Armenian Convent at Venice

I SAW thy beauty in its high estate
Of perfect empire, where at set of sun
In the cool twilight of thy lucent leaves
The dewy freshness told that day was done.

Hast thou no gift beyond thine ivory cone's
Surpassing loveliness? Art thou not near —
More near than we — to nature's silentness;
Is it not voiceful to thy finer ear?

Thy folded secrecy doth like a charm
Compel to thought. What spring-born yearning lies
Within the quiet of thy stainless breast
That doth with languorous passion seem to rise?

The soul doth truant angels entertain
Who with reluctant joys their thoughts confess:
Low-breathing, to these sister spirits give
The virgin mysteries of thy heart to guess.

What whispers hast thou from yon childlike sea
That sobs all night beside these garden walls?
Canst thou interpret what the lark hath sung
When from the choir of heaven her music falls?

If for companionship of purity
The equal pallor of the risen moon
Disturb thy dreams, dost know to read aright
Her silver tracery on the dark lagoon?

The mischief-making fruitfulness of May
Stirs all the garden folk with vague desires:
Doth there not reach thine apprehensive ear
The faded longing of these dark-robed friars,

When, in the evening hour to memories given,
Some gray-haired man amid the gathering gloom
For one delirious moment sees again
The gleam of eyes and white-walled Erzeroum?

Hast thou not loved him for this human dream?
Or sighed with him who yester-evening sat
Upon the low sea-wall, and saw through tears
His ruined home, and snow-clad Ararat?

If thou art dowered with some refinëd sense
That shares the counsels of the nesting bird,
Canst hear the mighty laughter of the earth,
And all that ear of man hath never heard,

If the abysmal stillness of the night
Be eloquent for thee, if thou canst read
The glowing rubric of the morning song,
Doth each new day no gentle warning breed?

Shall not the gossip of the maudlin bee,
The fragrant history of the fallen rose,
Unto the prescience of instinctive love
Some humbler prophecy of joy disclose?

Cold vestal of the leafy convent cell,
The traitor days have thy calm trust betrayed;
The sea-wind boldly parts thy shining leaves
To let the angel in. Be not afraid!

The gold-winged sun, divinely penetrant,
The pure annunciation of the morn
Breathes o'er thy chastity, and to thy soul
The tender thrill of motherhood is borne.

Set wide the glory of thy perfect bloom!
Call every wind to share thy scented breaths!
No life is brief that doth perfection win.
To-day is thine — to-morrow thou art death's!

149. Of One Who Seemed to Have Failed

DEATH'S but once more to-morrow. Thou art gray
With many a death of many a yesterday.
O yearning heart that lacked the athlete's force
And, stumbling, fell upon the beaten course,
And looked, and saw with ever glazing eyes
Some lower soul that seemed to win the prize!
Lo, Death, the just, who comes to all alike,
Life's sorry scales of right anew shall strike.
Forth, through the night, on unknown shores to win
The peace of God unstirred by sense of sin!
There love without desire shall, like a mist
At evening precious to the drooping flower,
Possess thy soul in ownership, and kissed
By viewless lips, whose touch shall be a dower

Of genius and of winged serenity,
Thou shalt abide in realms of poesy.
There soul hath touch of soul, and there the great
Cast wide to welcome thee joy's golden gate.
Freeborn to untold thoughts that age on age
Caressed sweet singers in their sacred sleep,
Thy soul shall enter on its heritage
Of God's unuttered wisdom. Thou shalt sweep
With hand assured the ringing lyre of life,
Till the fierce anguish of its bitter strife,
Its pain, death, discord, sorrow, and despair,
Break into rhythmic music. Thou shalt share
The prophet-joy that kept forever glad
God's poet-souls when all a world was sad.
Enter and live! Thou hast not lived before;
We were but soul-cast shadows. Ah, no more
The heart shall bear the burdens of the brain;
Now shall the strong heart think, nor think in vain.
In the dear company of peace, and those
Who bore for man life's utmost agony,
Thy soul shall climb to cliffs of still repose,
And see before thee lie Time's mystery,
And that which is God's time, Eternity;
Whence sweeping over thee dim myriad things,
The awful centuries yet to be, in hosts
That stir the vast of heaven with formless wings,
Shall cast for thee their shrouds, and, like to ghosts,
Unriddle all the past, till, awed and still,
Thy soul the secret hath of good and ill.

150. *The Quaker Graveyard*

FOUR straight brick walls, severely plain,
A quiet city square surround;
A level space of nameless graves, —
The Quakers' burial-ground.

In gown of gray, or coat of drab,
They trod the common ways of life,
With passions held in sternest leash,
And hearts that knew not strife.

To yon grim meeting-house they fared,
With thoughts as sober as their speech,
To voiceless prayer, to songless praise,
To hear the elders preach.

Through quiet lengths of days they came,
With scarce a change to this repose;
Of all life's loveliness they took
The thorn without the rose.

But in the porch and o'er the graves,
Glad rings the southward robin's glee,
And sparrows fill the autumn air
With merry mutiny;

While on the graves of drab and gray
The red and gold of autumn lie,
And wilful Nature decks the sod
In gentlest mockery.

151. *Idleness*

THERE is no dearer lover of lost hours
Than I.
I can be idler than the idlest flowers;
More idly lie
Than noonday lilies languidly afloat,
And water pillowed in a windless moat.
And I can be
Stiller than some gray stone
That hath no motion known.
It seems to me
That my still idleness doth make my own
All magic gifts of joy's simplicity.

152. *A Decanter of Madeira, Aged 86, to George Bancroft, Aged 86, Greeting*

GOOD Master, you and I were born
In "Teacup days" of hoop and hood,
And when the silver cue hung down,
And toasts were drunk, and wine was good;

When kin of mine (a jolly brood)
From sideboards looked, and knew full well
What courage they had given the beau,
How generous made the blushing belle.

Ah me! what gossip could I prate
Of days when doors were locked at dinners!
Believe me, I have kissed the lips
Of many pretty saints — or sinners.

Lip service have I done, alack!
I don't repent, but come what may,
What ready lips, sir, I have kissed,
Be sure at least I shall not say.

Two honest gentlemen are we, —
I Demi John, whole George are you;
When Nature grew us one in years
She meant to make a generous brew.

She bade me store for festal hours
The sun our south-side vineyard knew;
To sterner tasks she set your life,
As statesman, writer, scholar, grew.

Years eighty-six have come and gone;
At last we meet. Your health to-night.
Take from this board of friendly hearts
The memory of a proud delight.

The days that went have made you wise,
There's wisdom in my rare bouquet.
I'm rather paler than I was;
And, on my soul, you're growing gray.

I like to think, when Toper Time
Has drained the last of me and you,
Some here shall say, They both were good, —
The wine we drank, the man we knew.

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

1830–1886

153. *A Little While I Fain Would Linger Yet*

A LITTLE while (my life is almost set!)
I fain would pause along the downward way,
Musing an hour in this sad sunset-ray,
While, Sweet! our eyes with tender tears are wet:
A little hour I fain would linger yet.

A little while I fain would linger yet,
All for love's sake, for love that cannot tire;
Though fervid youth be dead, with youth's desire,
And hope has faded to a vague regret,
A little while I fain would linger yet.

A little while I fain would linger here:
Behold! who knows what strange, mysterious bars
'Twixt souls that love may rise in other stars?
Nor can love deem the face of death is fair:
A little while I still would linger here.

A little while I yearn to hold thee fast,
Hand locked in hand, and loyal heart to heart;
(O pitying Christ! those woeful words, "We part!")
So ere the darkness fall, the light be past,
A little while I fain would hold thee fast.

A little while, when light and twilight meet, —
Behind, our broken years; before, the deep
Weird wonder of the last unfathomed sleep, —
A little while I still would clasp thee, Sweet,
A little while, when night and twilight meet.

A little while I fain would linger here;
Behold! who knows what soul-dividing bars
Earth's faithful loves may part in other stars?
Nor can love deem the face of death is fair:
A little while I still would linger here.

154. *A Storm in the Distance*

I SEE the cloud-born squadrons of the gale,
Their lines of rain like glittering spears deprest,
While all the affrighted land grows darkly pale
In flashing change on earth's half-shielded breast.

Sounds like the rush of trampling columns float
From that fierce conflict; volleyed thunders peal,
Blent with the maddened wind's wild bugle-note;
The lightnings flash, the solid woodlands reel!

Ha! many a foliaged guardian of the height,
Majestic pine or chestnut, riven and bare,
Falls in the rage of that aerial flight,
Led by the Prince of all the Powers of air!

Vast boughs like shattered banners hurtling fly
Down the thick tumult: while, like emerald snow,
Millions of orphaned leaves make wild the sky,
Or drift in shuddering helplessness below.

Still, still, the levelled lances of the rain
At earth's half-shielded breast take glittering aim;
All space is life with fury, racked with pain,
Earth bathed in vapor, and heaven rent by flame!

At last the cloud-battalions through long rifts
Of luminous mists retire: — the strife is done,
And earth once more her wounded beauty lifts,
To meet the healing kisses of the sun.

EMILY DICKINSON

1830–1886

155. *From "Life"*

I [1]

OUR share of night to bear,
Our share of morning,
Our blank in bliss to fill,
Our blank in scorning.

Here a star, and there a star,
Some lose their way.
Here a mist, and there a mist,
Afterwards — day!

II [1]

He ate and drank the precious words,
His spirit grew robust;
He knew no more that he was poor,
Nor that his frame was dust.
He danced along the dingy days,
And this bequest of wings
Was but a book. What liberty
A loosened spirit brings!

[1] Copyright, 1890, by Little, Brown & Company

III[1]

I found the phrase to every thought
I ever had, but one;
And that defies me, — as a hand
Did try to chalk the sun

To races nurtured in the dark: —
How would your own begin?
Can blaze be done in cochineal,
Or noon in mazarin?

IV[2]

My life closed twice before its close;
  It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
  A third event to me,

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
  As these that twice befell:
Parting is all we know of heaven,
  And all we need of hell.

V[1]

Just lost when I was saved!
Just felt the world go by!
Just girt me for the onset with eternity,
When breath blew back,
And on the other side
I heard recede the disappointed tide;

[1] Copyright, 1891, by Little, Brown & Company
[2] Copyright, 1896, by Little, Brown & Company

Therefore, as one returned, I feel,
Odd secrets of the line to tell!
Some sailor, skirting foreign shores,
Some pale reporter from the awful doors
Before the seal!

Next time, to stay!
Next time, the things to see
By ear unheard,
Unscrutinized by eye.

Next time, to tarry,
While the ages steal, —
Slow tramp the centuries,
And the cycles wheel.

VI [1]

Of all the souls that stand create
I have elected one.
When sense from spirit files away,
And subterfuge is done;

When that which is and that which was
Apart, intrinsic, stand,
And this brief tragedy of flesh
Is shifted like a sand;

When figures show their royal front
And mists are carved away, —
Behold the atom I preferred
To all the lists of clay!

[1] Copyright, 1891, by Little, Brown & Company

VII [1]

Alter? When the hills do.
Falter? When the sun
Question if his glory
Be the perfect one.

Surfeit? When the daffodil
Doth of the dew:
Even as herself, O friend!
I will of you!

VIII [2]

Heart, we will forget him!
  You and I, to-night!
You may forget the warmth he gave
  I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me,
  That I my thoughts may dim;
Haste! lest while you're lagging,
  I may remember him!

IX [2]

A lady red upon the hill
  Her annual secret keeps;
A lady white within the field
  In placid lily sleeps!

[1] Copyright, 1890, by Little, Brown & Company
[2] Copyright, 1896, by Little, Brown & Company

The tidy breezes with their brooms
  Sweep vale, and hill, and tree!
Prithee, my pretty housewives!
  Who may expected be?

The neighbors do not yet suspect!
  The woods exchange a smile, —
Orchard, and buttercup, and bird,
  In such a little while!

And yet how still the landscape stands,
  How nonchalant the wood,
As if the resurrection
  Were nothing very odd!

X[1]

The morns are meeker than they were,
The nuts are getting brown;
The berry's cheek is plumper,
The rose is out of town.
The maple wears a gayer scarf,
The field a scarlet gown.
Lest I should be old-fashioned,
I'll put a trinket on.

XI[1]

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

[1] Copyright, 1890, by Little, Brown & Company

A narrow wind complains all day
How someone treated him:
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

XII [2]

God made a little gentian;
It tried to be a rose
And failed, and all the summer laughed:
But just before the snows
There came a purple creature
That ravished all the hill;
And summer hid her forehead,
And mockery was still.
The frosts were her condition;
The Tyrian would not come
Until the North evoked it:—
"Creator! shall I bloom?"

XIII [1]

Delayed till she had ceased to know,
Delayed till in its vest of snow
  Her loving bosom lay:
An hour behind the fleeting breath,
Later by just an hour than death,—
  Oh, lagging yesterday!

Could she have guessed that it would be;
Could but a crier of the glee
  Have climbed the distant hill;

[1] Copyright, 1890, by Little, Brown & Company
[2] Copyright, 1891, by Little, Brown & Company

Had not the bliss so slow a pace, —
Who knows but this surrendered face
Were undefeated still?

Oh, if there may departing be
Any forgot by victory
In her imperial round,
Show them this meek apparelled thing,
That could not stop to be a king,
Doubtful if it be crowned!

XIV [1]

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

XV [2]

They dropped like flakes, they dropped like stars,
Like petals from a rose,
When suddenly across the June
A wind with finger goes.

[1] Copyright, 1890, by Little, Brown & Company
[2] Copyright, 1891, by Little, Brown & Company

They perished in the seamless grass, —
No eye could find the place;
But God on his repealless list
Can summon every face.

XVI [1]

I have not told my garden yet,
Lest that should conquer me;
I have not quite the strength now
To break it to the bee.

I will not name it in the street,
For shops would stare, that I,
So shy, so very ignorant,
Should have the face to die.

The hillsides must not know it,
Where I have rambled so,
Nor tell the loving forests
The day that I shall go,

Nor lisp it at the table,
Nor heedless by the way
Hint that within the riddle
One will walk to-day!

XVII [1]

She died, — this was the way she died;
And when her breath was done,
Took up her simple wardrobe
And started for the sun.

[1] Copyright, 1891, by Little, Brown & Company

Her little figure at the gate
The angels must have spied,
Since I could never find her
Upon the mortal side.

XVIII[1]

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward Eternity.

[1] Copyright, 1890, by Little, Brown & Company

XIX [1]

Have you got a brook in your little heart,
Where bashful flowers blow,
And blushing birds go down to drink,
And shadows tremble so?

And nobody knows, so still it flows,
That any brook is there;
And yet your little draught of life
Is daily drunken there.

Then look out for the little brook in March,
When the rivers ever flow,
And the snow comes hurrying from the hills,
And the bridges often go.

And later, in August it may be,
When the meadows parching lie,
Beware, lest this little brook of life
Some burning noon go dry!

XX [1]

I'll tell you how the sun rose, —
A ribbon at a time.
The steeples swam in amethyst,
The news like squirrels ran.

The hills untied their bonnets,
The bobolinks begun.
Then I said softly to myself,
"That must have been the Sun!"

. . . . . .

[1] Copyright, 1890, by Little, Brown & Company

But has he set, I know not:
There seemed a purple stile
Which little yellow boys and girls
Were climbing all the while,

Till when they reached the other side,
A dominie in gray
Put gently up the evening bars,
And led the flock away.

XXI [1]

The bustle in a house
The morning after death
Is solemnest of industries
Enacted upon earth, —

The sweeping up the heart,
And putting love away
We shall not want to use again
Until Eternity.

NORA PERRY

1833–1896

156. *Riding Down*

OH, did you see him riding down,
And riding down, while all the town
Came out to see, came out to see,
And all the bells rang mad with glee?

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Oh, did you hear those bells ring out,
The bells ring out, the people shout,
And did you hear that cheer on cheer
That over all the bells rang clear?

And did you see the waving flags,
The fluttering flags, the tattered flags,
Red, white, and blue, shot through and through,
Baptized with battle's deadly dew?

And did you hear the drums' gay beat,
The drums' gay beat, the bugles sweet,
The cymbals' clash, the cannons' crash,
That rent the sky with sound and flash?

And did you see me waiting there,
Just waiting there and watching there,
One little lass, amid the mass
That pressed to see the hero pass?

And did you see him smiling down,
And smiling down, as riding down
With slowest pace, with stately grace,
He caught the vision of a face, —

My face uplifted red and white,
Turned red and white with sheer delight
To meet the eyes, the smiling eyes,
Outflashing in their swift surprise?

Oh, did you see how swift it came,
How swift it came, like sudden flame,
That smile to me, to only me,
The little lass who blushed to see?

And at the windows all along,
Oh, all along, a lovely throng
Of faces fair, beyond compare,
Beamed out upon him riding there!

Each face was like a radiant gem,
A sparkling gem, and yet for them
No swift smile came, like sudden flame,
No arrowy glance took certain aim.

He turned away from all their grace,
From all that grace of perfect face,
He turned to me, to only me,
The little lass who blushed to see!

HELEN HUNT JACKSON

1831–1885

157. *Coronation*

AT the king's gate the subtle noon
Wove filmy yellow nets of sun;
Into the drowsy snare too soon
The guards fell one by one.

Through the king's gate, unquestioned then,
A beggar went, and laughed, "This brings
Me chance at last, to see if men
Fare better, being kings."

The king sat bowed beneath his crown,
Propping his face with listless hand,
Watching the hour-glass sifting down
Too slow its shining sand.

"Poor man, what wouldst thou have of me?"
The beggar turned, and, pitying,
Replied like one in dream, "Of thee,
Nothing. I want the king."

Uprose the king, and from his head
Shook off the crown and threw it by.
"O man, thou must have known," he said,
"A greater king than I."

Through all the gates, unquestioned then,
Went king and beggar hand in hand.
Whispered the king, "Shall I know when
Before His throne I stand?"

The beggar laughed. Free winds in haste
Were wiping from the king's hot brow
The crimson lines the crown had traced.
"This is His presence now."

At the king's gate, the crafty noon
Unwove its yellow nets of sun;
Out of their sleep in terror soon
The guards waked one by one.

"Ho here! Ho there! Has no man seen
The king?" The cry ran to and fro;
Beggar and king, they laughed, I ween,
The laugh that free men know.

On the king's gate the moss grew gray;
The king came not. They called him dead;
And made his eldest son one day
Slave in his father's stead.

158. *Emigravit*

WITH sails full set, the ship her anchor weighs.
Strange names shines out beneath her figure head.
What glad farewells with eager eyes are said!
What cheer for him who goes, and him who stays!
Fair skies, rich lands, new homes, and untried days
Some go to seek: the rest but wait instead,
Watching the way wherein their comrades led,
Until the next stanch ship her flag doth raise.
Who knows what myriad colonies there are
Of fairest fields, and rich, undreamed-of gains
Thick planted in the distant shining plains
Which we call sky because they lie so far?
Oh, write of me, not "Died in bitter pains,"
But "Emigrated to another star!"

159. *Poppies in the Wheat*

ALONG Ancona's hills the shimmering heat,
A tropic tide of air, with ebb and flow
Bathes all the fields of wheat until they glow
Like flashing seas of green, which toss and beat

Around the vines. The poppies lithe and fleet
Seem running, fiery torchmen, to and fro
To mark the shore. The farmer does not know
That they are there. He walks with heavy feet,
Counting the bread and wine by autumn's gain,
But I, — I smile to think that days remain
Perhaps to me in which, though bread be sweet
No more, and red wine warm my blood in vain,
I shall be glad remembering how the fleet,
Lithe poppies ran like torchmen with the wheat.

160. *A Last Prayer*

FATHER, I scarcely dare to pray,
So clear I see, now it is done,
That I have wasted half my day,
And left my work but just begun;

So clear I see that things I thought
Were right or harmless were a sin;
So clear I see that I have sought,
Unconscious, selfish aims to win;

So clear I see that I have hurt
The souls I might have helped to save;
That I have slothful been, inert,
Deaf to the calls thy leaders gave.

In outskirts of thy kingdoms vast,
Father, the humblest spot give me;
Set me the lowliest task thou hast;
Let me repentant work for thee!

161. *Habeas Corpus*

MY body, eh? Friend Death, how now?
Why all this tedious pomp of writ?
Thou hast reclaimed it sure and slow
For half a century, bit by bit.

In faith thou knowest more to-day
Than I do, where it can be found!
This shriveled lump of suffering clay,
To which I now am chained and bound,

Has not of kith or kin a trace
To the good body once I bore;
Look at this shrunken, ghastly face:
Didst ever see that face before?

Ah, well, friend Death, good friend thou art;
Thy only fault thy lagging gait,
Mistaken pity in thy heart
For timorous ones that bid thee wait.

Do quickly all thou hast to do,
Nor I nor mine will hindrance make;
I shall be free when thou art through;
I grudge thee naught that thou must take!

Stay! I have lied: I grudge thee one,
Yes, two I grudge thee at this last, —
Two members which have faithful done
My will and bidding in the past.

I grudge thee this right hand of mine;
I grudge thee this quick-beating heart;
They never gave me coward sign,
Nor played me once a traitor's part.

I see now why in olden days
Men in barbaric love or hate
Nailed enemies' hands at wild crossways,
Shrined leaders' hearts in costly state:

The symbol, sign, and instrument
Of each soul's purpose, passion, strife,
Of fires in which are poured and spent
Their all of love, their all of life.

O feeble, mighty human hand!
O fragile, dauntless human heart!
The universe holds nothing planned
With such sublime, transcendent art!

Yes, Death, I own I grudge thee mine
Poor little hand, so feeble now;
Its wrinkled palm, its altered line,
Its veins so pallid and so slow —

(*Unfinished here.*)

Ah, well, friend Death, good friend thou art:
I shall be free when thou art through.
Take all there is — take hand and heart:
There must be somewhere work to do.

ELIZABETH AKERS ALLEN

1832–1911

162. *Rock Me to Sleep*

BACKWARD, turn backward, O Time, in your flight,
Make me a child again just for to-night!
Mother, come back from the echoless shore,
Take me again to your heart as of yore;
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair;
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep; —
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!

Backward, flow backward, O tide of the years!
I am so weary of toil and of tears, —
Toil without recompense, tears all in vain, —
Take them, and give me my childhood again!
I have grown weary of dust and decay, —
Weary of flinging my soul-wealth away;
Weary of sowing for others to reap; —
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!

Tired of the hollow, the base, the untrue,
Mother, O mother, my heart calls for you!
Many a summer the grass has grown green,
Blossomed and faded, our faces between:
Yet, with strong yearning and passionate pain,
Long I to-night for your presence again.
Come from the silence so long and so deep; —
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!

Over my heart, in the days that are flown,
No love like mother-love ever has shone;
No other worship abides and endures, —
Faithful, unselfish, and patient like yours:
None like a mother can charm away pain
From the sick soul and the world-weary brain.
Slumber's soft calms o'er my heavy lids creep; —
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!

Come, let your brown hair, just lighted with gold,
Fall on your shoulders again as of old;
Let it drop over my forehead to-night,
Shading my faint eyes away from the light;
For with its sunny-edged shadows once more
Haply will throng the sweet visions of yore;
Lovingly, softly, its bright billows sweep; —
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!

Mother, dear mother, the years have been long
Since I last listened your lullaby song:
Sing, then, and unto my soul it shall seem
Womanhood's years have been only a dream.
Clasped to your heart in a loving embrace,
With your light lashes just sweeping my face,
Never hereafter to wake or to weep; —
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

1833–1908

163. How Old Brown Took Harper's Ferry

JOHN BROWN in Kansas settled, like a steadfast Yankee farmer,
Brave and godly, with four sons, all stalwart men of might.
There he spoke aloud for freedom, and the Border-strife grew warmer,
Till the Rangers fired his dwelling, in his absence, in the night;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Came homeward in the morning to find his house burned down.

Then he grasped his trusty rifle and boldly fought for freedom;
Smote from border unto border the fierce, invading band;
And he and his brave boys vowed — so might Heaven help and speed 'em! —
They would save those grand old prairies from the curse that blights the land;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Said, "Boys, the Lord will aid us!" and he shoved his ramrod down.

And the Lord *did* aid these men, and they labored day and even,
Saving Kansas from its peril; and their very lives seemed charmed,
Till the ruffians killed one son, in the blessed light of Heaven, —
In cold blood the fellows slew him, as he journeyed all unarmed;
Then Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Shed not a tear, but shut his teeth, and frowned a terrible frown!

Then they seized another brave boy, — not amid the heat of battle,
But in peace, behind his ploughshare, — and they loaded him with chains,
And with pikes, before their horses, even as they goad their cattle,
Drove him cruelly, for their sport, and at last blew out his brains;
Then Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Raised his right hands up to Heaven, calling Heaven's vengeance down.

And he swore a fearful oath, by the name of the Almighty,
He would hunt this ravening evil that had scathed and torn him so;

He would seize it by the vitals; he would crush it day and night; he
Would so pursue its footsteps, so return it blow for blow,
That Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Should be a name to swear by, in backwoods or in town!

Then his beard became more grizzled, and his wild blue eye grew wilder,
And more sharply curved his hawk's-nose, snuffing battle from afar;
And he and the two boys left, though the Kansas strife waxed milder,
Grew more sullen, till was over the bloody Border War,
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Had gone crazy, as they reckoned by his fearful glare and frown.

So he left the plains of Kansas and their bitter woes behind him,
Slipt off into Virginia, where the statesmen all are born,
Hired a farm by Harper's Ferry, and no one knew where to find him,
Or whether he'd turned parson, or was jacketed and shorn;
For Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Mad as he was, knew texts enough to wear a parson's gown.

He bought no ploughs and harrows, spades and shovels,
and such trifles;
But quietly to his rancho there came, by every train,
Boxes full of pikes and pistols, and his well-beloved Sharps
rifles;
And eighteen other madmen joined their leader there
again.
Says Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
"Boys, we've got an army large enough to march and take
the town!

Take the town, and seize the muskets, free the negroes
and then arm them;
Carry the County and the State, ay, and all the potent
South.
On their own heads be the slaughter, if their victims rise
to harm them —
These Virginians! who believed not, nor would heed
the warning mouth."
Says Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
"The world shall see a Republic, or my name is not
John Brown."

'Twas the sixteenth of October, on the evening of a
Sunday:
"This good work," declared the captain, "shall be on
a holy night!"
It was on a Sunday evening, and before the noon of Mon-
day,

With two sons, and Captain Stephens, fifteen privates
—black and white,
Captain Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Marched across the bridged Potomac, and knocked the sentry down;

Took the guarded armory-building, and the muskets and the cannon;
Captured all the county majors and the colonels, one by one;
Scared to death each gallant scion of Virginia they ran on,
And before the noon of Monday, I say, the deed was done.
Mad Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
With his eighteen other crazy men, went in and took the town.

Very little noise and bluster, little smell of powder made he;
It was all done in the midnight, like the Emperor's *coup d'état*.
"Cut the wires! Stop the rail-cars! Hold the streets and bridges!" said he,
Then declared the new Republic, with himself for guiding star, —
This Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown;
And the bold two thousand citizens ran off and left the town.

Then was riding and railroading and expressing here and thither;
And the Martinsburg Sharpshooters and the Charlestown Volunteers,
And the Shepherdstown and Winchester Militia hastened whither
Old Brown was said to muster his ten thousand grenadiers.

General Brown!
Osawatomie Brown!!

Behind whose rampant banner all the North was pouring down.

But at last, 'tis said, some prisoners escaped from Old Brown's durance,
And the effervescent valor of the Chivalry broke out,
When they learned that nineteen madmen had the marvellous assurance —
Only nineteen — thus to seize the place and drive them straight about;

And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,

Found an army come to take him, encamped around the town.

But to storm, with all the forces I have mentioned, was too risky;
So they hurried off to Richmond for the Government Marines,
Tore them from their weeping matrons, fired their souls with Bourbon whiskey,

Till they battered down Brown's castle with their
ladders and machines;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Received three bayonet stabs, and a cut on his brave old
crown.

Tallyho! the old Virginia gentry gather to the baying!
In they rushed and killed the game, shooting lustily
away;
And whene'er they slew a rebel, those who came too late
for slaying,
Not to lose a share of glory, fired their bullets in his
clay;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Saw his sons fall dead beside him, and between them laid
him down.

How the conquerors wore their laurels; how they hastened
on the trial;
How Old Brown was placed, half dying, on the
Charlestown court-house floor;
How he spoke his grand oration, in the scorn of all
denial;
What the brave old madman told them, — these are
known the country o'er.
"Hang Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,"
Said the judge, "and all such rebels!" with his most
judicial frown.

But Virginians, don't do it! for I tell you that the flagon,
Filled with blood of Old Brown's offspring, was first poured by Southern hands;
And each drop from Old Brown's life-veins, like the red gore of the dragon,
May spring up a vengeful Fury, hissing through your slave-worn lands!
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
May trouble you more than ever, when you've nailed his coffin down!

164. *Morgan*

OH, what a set of Vagabundos,
Sons of Neptune, sons of Mars,
Raked from todos otros mundos,
Lascars, Gascons, Portsmouth tars,
Prison mate and dock-yard fellow,
Blades to Meg and Molly dear,
Off to capture Porto Bello
Sailed with Morgan the Buccaneer!

Out they voyaged from Port Royal
(Fathoms deep its ruins be,
Pier and convent, fortress loyal,
Sunk beneath the gaping sea);

On the Spaniard's beach they landed,
Dead to pity, void of fear,
Round their blood-red flag embanded,
Led by Morgan the Buccaneer.

Dawn till dusk they stormed the castle,
Beat the gates and gratings down;
Then, with ruthless rout and wassail,
Night and day they sacked the town,
Staved the bins its cellars boasted,
Port and Lisbon, tier on tier,
Quaffed to heart's content, and toasted
Harry Morgan the Buccaneer:

Stripped the church and monastery,
Racked the prior for his gold,
With the traders' wives made merry,
Lipped the young and mocked the old,
Diced for hapless señoritas
(Sire and brother bound anear), —
Juanas, Lolas, Manuelitas,
Cursing Morgan the Buccaneer.

Lust and rapine, flame and slaughter,
Forayed with the Welshman grim:
"Take my pesos, spare my daughter!"
"Ha! ha!" roared the devil's limb,
"These shall jingle in our pouches,
She with us shall find good cheer."
"Lash the graybeard till he crouches!"
Shouted Morgan the Buccaneer.

Out again through reef and breaker,
While the Spaniard moaned his fate,
Back they voyaged to Jamaica,
Flush with doubloons, coins of eight,

Crosses wrung from Popish varlets,
  Jewels torn from arm and ear, —
Jesu! how the Jews and harlots
  Welcomed Morgan the Buccaneer!

165. *Falstaff's Song*

WHERE'S he that died o' Wednesday?
  What place on earth hath he?
A tailor's yard beneath, I wot,
  Where worms approaching be;
For the wight that died o' Wednesday,
  Just laid the light below,
Is dead as the varlet turned to clay
  A score of years ago.

Where's he that died o' Sabba' day?
  Good Lord, I'd not be he!
The best of days is foul enough
  From this world's fare to flee;
And the saint that died o' Sabba' day,
  With his grave turf yet to grow,
Is dead as the sinner brought to pray
  A hundred years ago.

Where's he that died o' yesterday?
  What better chance hath he
To clink the can and toss the pot
  When this night's junkets be?
For the lad that died o' yesterday
  Is just as dead — ho! ho! —
As the whoreson knave men laid away
  A thousand years ago.

166. *The Dutch Patrol*

WHEN Christmas-Eve is ended,
Just at the noon of night,
Rare things are seen by mortal een
That have the second sight.
In St. Mark's church-yard then
They see the shape arise
Of him who ruled Nieuw Amsterdam
And here in slumber lies.

His face, beneath the close black cap,
Has a martial look and grim;
On either side his locks fall wide
To the broad collar's rim;
His sleeves are slashed; the velvet coat
Is fashioned Hollandese
Above his fustian breeches, trimmed
With scarf-knots at the knees.

His leg of flesh is hosed in silk;
His wooden leg is bound,
As well befits a conqueror's,
With silver bands around.
He reads the lines that mark
His tablet on the wall,
Where boldly PETRUS STUYVESANT
Stands out beyond them all.

"'Tis well!" he says, and sternly smiles,
"They hold our memory dear;
Nor rust nor moss hath crept across;
'Twill last this many a year."

Then down the path he strides,
And through the iron gate,
Where the sage Nine Men, his councillors,
Their Governor await.

Here are Van der Donck and Van Cortlandt,
A triplet more of Vans,
And Hendrick Kip of the haughty lip,
And Govert Loockermans,
Jan Jansen Dam, and Jansen,
Of whom our annals tell,—
All risen this night their lord to greet
At sound of the Christmas bell.

Nine lusty forms in linsey coats,
Puffed sleeves and ample hose!
Each burgher smokes a Flemish pipe
To warm his ancient nose;
The smoke-wreaths rise like mist,
The smokers all are mute,
Yet all, with pipes thrice waving slow,
Brave Stuyvesant salute.

Then into ranks they fall,
And step out three by three,
And he of the wooden leg and staff
In front walks solemnly.
Along their wonted course
The phantom troop patrol,
To see how fares Nieuw Amsterdam,
And what the years unroll.

Street after street and mile on mile,
From river bound to bound,
From old St. Mark's to Whitehall Point,
They foot the limits round;
From Maiden Lane to Corlaer's Hook
The Dutchmen's pijpen glow,
But never a word from their lips is heard,
And none their passing know.

Ere the first streak of dawn
St. Mark's again they near,
And by a vault the Nine Men halt,
Their Governor's voice to hear.
"Mynheeren," he says, "ye see
Each year our borders spread!
So, one by one, the landmarks gone,
And marvels come instead!

"Not even a windmill left,
Nor a garden-plot we knew,
And but a paling marks the spot
Where erst my pear-tree grew.
Our walks are wearier still, —
Perchance and it were best,
So little of worth is left on earth,
To break no more our rest? "

Thus speaks old Petrus doubtfully
And shakes his valiant head,
When — on the roofs a sound of hoofs,
A rattling, pattering tread!

The bells of reindeer tinkle,
  The Dutchmen plainly spy
St. Nicholas, who drives his team
  Across the roof-tops nigh.

"Beshrew me for a craven!"
  Cries Petrus — "All goes well!
Our patron saint still makes his round
  At sound of the Christmas bell.
So long as staunch St. Nicholas
  Shall guard these houses tall,
There shall come no harm from hostile arm —
  No evil chance befall!

"The yongens and the meisjes
  Shall have their hosen filled;
The butcher and the baker,
  And every honest guild,
Shall merrily thrive and flourish;
  Good-night, and be of cheer;
We may safely lay us down again
  To sleep another year!"

Once more the pipes are waved,
  Stout Petrus gives the sign,
The misty smoke enfolds them round, —
  Him and his burghers nine.
All, when the cloud has lifted,
  Have vanished quite away,
And the crowing cock and steeple clock
  Proclaim 'tis Christmas-Day.

167. *Cousin Lucrece*

HERE where the curfew
Still, they say, rings,
Time rested long ago,
Folding his wings;
Here, on old Norwich's
Out-along road,
Cousin Lucretia
Had her abode.

Norridge, not Nor-wich
(See Mother Goose),
Good enough English
For a song's use.
Side and roof shingled,
All of a piece,
Here was the cottage
Of Cousin Lucrece.

Living forlornly
On nothing a year,
How she took comfort
Does not appear;
How kept her body,
On what they gave,
Out of the poor-house,
Out of the grave.

Highly connected?
Straight as the Nile
Down from "the Gard'ners"
Of Gardiner's Isle;

(Three bugles, chevron gules,
Hand upon sword),
Great-great-granddaughter
Of the third lord.

Bent almost double,
Deaf as a witch,
Gout her chief trouble —
Just as if rich;
Vain of her ancestry,
Mouth all agrin,
Nose half-way meeting her
Sky-pointed chin.

Ducking her forehead-top,
Wrinkled and bare,
With a colonial
Furbelowed air
Greeting her next of kin,
Nephew or niece, —
Foolish old, prating old
Cousin Lucrece.

Once every year she had
All she could eat:
Turkey and cranberries,
Pudding and sweet;
Every Thanksgiving,
Up to the great
House of her kinsman, was
Driven in state.

Oh, what a sight to see,
  Rigged in her best!
Wearing the famous gown
  Drawn from her chest, —
Worn, ere King George's reign
  Here chanced to cease,
Once by a forbear
  Of Cousin Lucrece.

Damask brocaded,
  Cut very low;
Short sleeves and finger-mitts
  Fit for a show;
Palsied neck shaking her
  Rust-yellow curls,
Rattling its roundabout
  String of mock pearls;

Over her noddle,
  Draggled and stark,
Two ostrich feathers —
  Brought from the ark.
Shoes of frayed satin,
  All heel and toe,
On her poor crippled feet
  Hobbled below.

My! how the Justice's
  Sons and their wives
Laughed; while the little folk
  Ran for their lives,

Asking if beldames
Out of the past,
Old fairy godmothers,
Always could last?

No! One Thanksgiving,
Bitterly cold,
After they took her home
(Ever so old),
In her great chair she sank,
There to find peace;
Died in her ancient dress —
Poor old Lucrece.

168. *Toujours Amour*

PRITHEE tell me, Dimple-Chin,
At what age does Love begin?
Your blue eyes have scarcely seen
Summers three, my fairy queen,
But a miracle of sweets,
Soft approaches, sly retreats,
Show the little archer there,
Hidden in your pretty hair;
When didst learn a heart to win?
Prithee tell me, Dimple-Chin!

"Oh!" the rosy lips reply,
"I can't tell you if I try.
'Tis so long I can't remember:
Ask some younger lass than I!"

Tell, O tell me, Grizzled-Face,
Do your heart and head keep pace?
When does hoary Love expire,
When do frosts put out the fire?
Can its embers burn below
All that chill December snow?
Care you still soft hands to press,
Bonny heads to smooth and bless?
When does Love give up the chase?
Tell, O tell me, Grizzled-Face!

"Ah!" the wise old lips reply,
"Youth may pass and strength may die;
But of Love I can't foretoken:
Ask some older sage than I!"

169. *The World Well Lost*

THAT year? Yes, doubtless I remember still, —
Though why take count of every wind that blows!
'Twas plain, men said, that Fortune used me ill
That year, — the selfsame year I met with Rose.

Crops failed; wealth took a flight; house, treasure, land,
Slipped from my hold — thus plenty comes and goes.
One friend I had, but he too loosed his hand
(Or was it I?) the year I met with Rose.

There was a war, I think; some rumor, too,
Of famine, pestilence, fire, deluge, snows;
Things went awry. My rivals, straight in view,
Throve, spite of all; but I, — I met with Rose.

That year my white-faced Alma pined and died:
Some trouble vexed her quiet heart, — who knows?
Not I, who scarcely missed her from my side,
Or aught else gone, the year I met with Rose.

Was there no more? Yes, that year life began:
All life before a dream, false joys, light woes, —
All after-life compressed within the span
Of that one year, — the year I met with Rose!

RICHARD REALF

1834–1878

170. *Indirection*

FAIR are the flowers and the children, but their subtle suggestion is fairer;
Rare is the roseburst of dawn, but the secret that clasps it is rarer;
Sweet the exultance of song, but the strain that precedes it is sweeter;
And never was poem yet writ, but the meaning outmastered the metre.

Never a daisy that grows, but a mystery guideth the growing;
Never a river that flows, but a majesty sceptres the flowing;
Never a Shakespeare that soared, but a stronger than he did enfold him,
Nor ever a prophet foretells, but a mightier seer hath foretold him.

Back of the canvas that throbs the painter is hinted and hidden;
Into the statue that breathes the soul of the sculptor is bidden;
Under the joy that is felt lie the infinite issues of feeling;
Crowning the glory revealed is the glory that crowns the revealing.

Great are the symbols of being, but that which is symboled is greater;
Vast the create and beheld, but vaster the inward creator;
Back of the sound broods the silence, back of the gift stands the giving;
Back of the hand that receives thrill the sensitive nerves of receiving.

Space is as nothing to spirit, the deed is outdone by the doing;
The heart of the wooer is warm, but warmer the heart of the wooing;
And up from the pits where these shiver, and up from the heights where those shine,
Twin voices and shadows swim starward, and the essence of life is divine.

171. *The World*

O EARTH! thou hast not any wind that blows
Which is not music; every weed of thine
Pressed rightly flows in aromatic wine;
And every humble hedgerow flower that grows,

And every little brown bird that doth sing,
Hath something greater than itself, and bears
A living Word to every living thing,
Albeit it hold the Message unawares.
All shapes and sounds have something which is not
Of them: a Spirit broods amid the grass;
Vague outlines of the Everlasting Thought
Lie in the melting shadows as they pass;
The touch of an Eternal Presence thrills
The fringes of the sunsets and the hills.

172. *An Old Man's Idyl*

BY the waters of Life we sat together,
Hand in hand in the golden days
Of the beautiful early summer weather,
When skies were purple and breath was praise,
When the heart kept tune to the carol of birds,
And the birds kept tune to the songs which ran
Through shimmer of flowers on grassy swards,
And trees with voices æolian.

By the rivers of Life we walked together,
I and my darling, unafraid;
And lighter than any linnet's feather
The burdens of being on us weighed.
And Love's sweet miracles o'er us threw
Mantles of joy outlasting Time,
And up from the rosy morrows grew
A sound that seemed like a marriage chime.

In the gardens of Life we strayed together;
And the luscious apples were ripe and red,
And the languid lilac and honeyed heather
Swooned with the fragrance which they shed.
And under the trees the angels walked,
And up in the air a sense of wings
Awed us tenderly while we talked
Softly in sacred communings.

In the meadows of Life we strayed together,
Watching the waving harvests grow;
And under the benison of the Father
Our hearts, like the lambs, skipped to and fro.
And the cowslip, hearing our low replies,
Broidered fairer the emerald banks,
And glad tears shone in the daisy's eyes,
And the timid violet glistened thanks.

Who was with us, and what was round us,
Neither myself nor my darling guessed;
Only we knew that something crowned us
Out from the heavens with crowns of rest;
Only we knew that something bright
Lingered lovingly where we stood,
Clothed with the incandescent light
Of something higher than humanhood.

O the riches Love doth inherit!
Ah, the alchemy which doth change
Dross of body and dregs of spirit
Into sanctities rare and strange!

My flesh is feeble and dry and old,
My darling's beautiful hair is gray;
But our elixir and precious gold
Laugh at the footsteps of decay.

Harms of the world have come unto us,
Cups of sorrow we yet shall drain;
But we have a secret which doth show us
Wonderful rainbows in the rain.
And we hear the tread of the years move by,
And the sun is setting behind the hills;
But my darling does not fear to die,
And I am happy in what God wills.

So we sit by our household fires together,
Dreaming the dreams of long ago:
Then it was balmy summer weather,
And now the valleys are laid in snow.
Icicles hang from the slippery eaves;
The wind blows cold, — 'tis growing late;
Well, well! we have garnered all our sheaves,
I and my darling, and we wait.

JOHN JAMES PIATT

1835–1917

173. *The Lost Genius*

A GIANT came to me when I was young,
My instant will to ask —
My earthly Servant, from the earth he sprung
Eager for any task!

"What wilt thou, O my Master? " he began,
"Whatever can be," I.
"Say thy first wish — whate'er thou wilt I can,"
The Strong Slave made reply.

"Enter the earth and bring its riches forth,
For pearls explore the sea,"
He brought, from East and West and South and North,
All treasures back to me!

"Build me a palace wherein I may dwell."
"Awake and see it done,"
Spake his great voice at dawn. Oh, miracle
That glittered in the sun!

"Find me the princess fit for my embrace,
The vision of my breast;
For her search every clime and every race."
My yearning arms were blessed!

"Get me all knowledge." Sages with their lore,
And poets with their songs,
Crowded my palace halls at every door,
In still, obedient throngs!

"Now bring me wisdom." Long ago he went;
(The cold task harder seems:)
He did not hasten with the last content —
The rest, meanwhile, were dreams!

Houseless and poor, on many a trackless road,
Without a guide, I found
A white-haired phantom with the world his load,
Bending him to the ground!

"I bring thee wisdom, Master." Is it he,
I marvelled then, in sooth?
"Thy palace-builder, beauty-seeker, see!"
I saw the Ghost of Youth!

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON

1835–1908

174. *To-night*

BEND low, O dusky Night,
And give my spirit rest.
Hold me to your deep breast,
And put old cares to flight.
Give back the lost delight
That once my soul possest,
When Love was loveliest.
Bend low, O dusky Night!

Enfold me in your arms —
The sole embrace I crave
Until the embracing grave
Shield me from life's alarms.
I dare your subtlest charms;
Your deepest spell I brave, —
O, strong to slay or save,
Enfold me in your arms!

175. *Laus Veneris*

A Picture by Burne Jones

PALLID with too much longing,
White with passion and prayer,
Goddess of love and beauty,
She sits in the picture there, —

Sits with her dark eyes seeking
Something more subtle still
Than the old delights of loving
Her measureless days to fill.

She has loved and been loved so often
In her long, immortal years,
That she tires of the worn-out rapture,
Sickens of hopes and fears.

No joys or sorrows move her,
Done with her ancient pride;
For her head she found too heavy
The crown she has cast aside.

Clothed in her scarlet splendor,
Bright with her glory of hair,
Sad that she is not mortal, —
Eternally sad and fair,

Longing for joys she knows not,
Athirst with a vain desire,
There she sits in the picture,
Daughter of foam and fire.

176. *Hic Jacet*

SO Love is dead that has been quick so long!
Close, then, his eyes, and bear him to his rest,
With eglantine and myrtle on his breast,
And leave him there, their pleasant scents among;
And chant a sweet and melancholy song
About the charms whereof he was possessed,
And how of all things he was loveliest,
And to compare with aught were him to wrong.
Leave him beneath the still and solemn stars,
That gather and look down from their far place
With their long calm our brief woes to deride,
Until the Sun the Morning's gate unbars
And mocks, in turn, our sorrows with his face; —
And yet, had Love been Love, he had not died.

177. *Were But My Spirit Loosed upon the Air*

WERE but my spirit loosed upon the air, —
By some High Power who could Life's chains unbind,
Set free to seek what most it longs to find, —
To no proud Court of Kings would I repair:
I would but climb, once more, a narrow stair,
When day was wearing late, and dusk was kind;
And one should greet me to my failings blind,
Content so I but shared his twilight there.
Nay! well I know he waits not as of old, —

I could not find him in the old-time place, —
I must pursue him, made by sorrow bold,
Through worlds unknown, in strange Celestial race,
Whose mystic round no traveller has told,
From star to star, until I see his face.

178. *We Lay Us Down to Sleep*

WE lay us down to sleep,
And leave to God the rest:
Whether to wake and weep
Or wake no more be best.

Why vex our souls with care?
The grave is cool and low, —
Have we found life so fair
That we should dread to go?

We've kissed love's sweet, red lips,
And left them sweet and red:
The rose the wild bee sips
Blooms on when he is dead.

Some faithful friends we've found;
But they who love us best,
When we are under ground,
Will laugh on with the rest.

No task have we begun
But other hands can take;
No work beneath the sun
For which we need to wake.

Then hold us fast, sweet Death,
If so it seemeth best
To Him who gave us breath
That we should go to rest.

We lay us down to sleep;
Our weary eyes we close:
Whether to wake and weep,
Or wake no more, He knows.

179. *The House of Death*

NOT a hand has lifted the latchet
Since she went out of the door —
No footstep shall cross the threshold,
Since she can come in no more.

There is rust upon locks and hinges,
And mold and blight on the walls,
And silence faints in the chambers,
And darkness waits in the halls —

Waits as all things have waited
Since she went, that day of spring,
Borne in her pallid splendor
To dwell in the Court of the King:

With lilies on brow and bosom,
With robes of silken sheen,
And her wonderful, frozen beauty,
The lilies and silk between.

Red roses she left behind her,
  But they died long, long ago —
'Twas the odorous ghost of a blossom
  That seemed through the dusk to glow.

The garments she left mock the shadows
  With hints of womanly grace,
And her image swims in the mirror
  That was so used to her face.

The birds make insolent music
  Where the sunshine riots outside,
And the winds are merry and wanton
  With the summer's pomp and pride.

But into this desolate mansion,
  Where Love has closed the door,
Nor sunshine nor summer shall enter,
  Since she can come in no more.

CELIA THAXTER

1836–1894

180. *May Morning*

WARM, wild, rainy wind, blowing fitfully,
  Stirring dreamy breakers on the slumberous May sea,
What shall fail to answer thee? What thing shall withstand
The spell of thine enchantment, flowing over sea and land?

All along the swamp-edge in the rain I go;
All about my head thou the loosened locks dost blow;
Like the German goose-girl in the fairy tale,
I watch across the shining pool my flock of ducks that sail.

Redly gleam the rose-haws, dripping with the wet,
Fruit of sober autumn, glowing crimson yet;
Slender swords of iris leaves cut the water clear,
And light green creeps the tender grass, thick-spreading
far and near.

Every last year's stalk is set with brown or golden studs;
All the boughs of bayberry are thick with scented buds;
Islanded in turfy velvet, where the ferns uncurl,
Lo! the large white duck's egg glimmers like a pearl!

Softly sing the billows, rushing, whispering low;
Freshly, oh, deliciously, the warm, wild wind doth blow!
Plaintive bleat of new-washed lambs comes faint from far
away;
And clearly cry the little birds, alert and blithe and gay.

O happy, happy morning! O dear, familiar place!
O warm, sweet tears of Heaven, fast falling on my face!
O well-remembered, rainy wind, blow all my care away,
That I may be a child again this blissful morn of May.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

1836–1907

181. "I Vex Me Not with Brooding on the Years"

I VEX me not with brooding on the years
That were ere I drew breath: why should I then
Distrust the darkness that may fall again
When life is done? Perchance in other spheres —
Dead planets — I once tasted mortal tears,
And walked as now amid a throng of men,
Pondering things that lay beyond my ken,
Questioning death, and solacing my fears.
Ofttimes indeed strange sense have I of this,
Vague memories that hold me with a spell,
Touches of unseen lips upon my brow,
Breathing some incommunicable bliss!
In years foregone, O Soul, was all not well?
Still lovelier life awaits thee. Fear not thou!

182. "Enamored Architect of Airy Rhyme"

ENAMORED architect of airy rhyme,
Build as thou wilt, heed not what each man says:
Good souls, but innocent of dreamers' ways,
Will come, and marvel why thou wastest time;
Others, beholding how thy turrets climb
'Twixt theirs and heaven, will hate thee all thy days;
But most beware of those who come to praise.

O Wondersmith, O worker in sublime
And heaven-sent dreams, let art be all in all;
Build as thou wilt, unspoiled by praise or blame,
Build as thou wilt, and as thy light is given;
Then, if at last the airy structure fall,
Dissolve, and vanish — take thyself no shame.
They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.

183. *Dirge*

LET us keep him warm,
Stir the dying fire:
Upon his tired arm
Slumbers young Desire.

Soon, ah, very soon
We too shall not know
Either sun or moon,
Either grass or snow.

Others in our place
Come to laugh and weep,
Win or lose the race,
And to fall asleep.

Let us keep him warm,
Stir the dying fire:
Upon his tired arm
Slumbers young Desire.

What does all avail —
Love, or power, or gold?
Life is like a tale
Ended ere 'tis told.

Much is left unsaid,
Much is said in vain —
Shall the broken thread
Be taken up again?

Let us keep him warm,
Stir the dying fire:
Upon his tired arm
Slumbers young Desire.

Kisses one or two
On his eyelids set,
That, when all is through,
He may not forget.

He has far to go —
Is it East or West?
Whither? Who may know!
Let him take his rest.

Wind, and snow, and sleet —
So the long night dies.
Draw the winding-sheet,
Cover up his eyes.

Let us keep him warm,
Stir the dying fire:
Upon his tired arm
Slumbers young Desire.

184. *Song from the Persian*

AH! sad are they who know not love,
But, far from passion's tears and smiles,
Drift down a moonless sea, beyond
The silvery coasts of fairy isles.

And sadder they whose longing lips
Kiss empty air, and never touch
The dear warm mouth of those they love —
Waiting, wasting, suffering much.

But clear as amber, fine as musk,
Is life to those who, pilgrim-wise,
Move hand in hand from dawn to dusk,
Each morning nearer Paradise.

Oh, not for them shall angels pray!
They stand in everlasting light,
They walk in Allah's smile by day,
And slumber in his heart by night.

185. *Tiger-Lilies*

ILIKE not lady-slippers,
Nor yet the sweet-pea blossoms,
Nor yet the flaky roses,
Red, or white as snow;
I like the chaliced lilies,
The heavy Eastern lilies,
The gorgeous tiger-lilies,
That in our garden grow.

For they are tall and slender;
Their mouths are dashed with carmine;
And when the wind sweeps by them,
On their emerald stalks
They bend so proud and graceful —
They are Circassian women,
The favorites of the Sultan,
Adown our garden walks.

And when the rain is falling,
I sit beside the window
And watch them glow and glisten,
How they burn and glow!
Oh for the burning lilies,
The tender Eastern lilies,
The gorgeous tiger-lilies,
That in our garden grow!

186. *Palabras Cariñosas*

GOOD–NIGHT! I have to say good-night
To such a host of peerless things!
Good-night unto the slender hand
All queenly with its weight of rings;
Good-night to fond, uplifted eyes,
Good-night to chestnut braids of hair,
Good-night unto the perfect mouth,
And all the sweetness nestled there —
The snowy hand detains me, then
I'll have to say Good-night again!

But there will come a time, my love,
When, if I read our stars aright,
I shall not linger by this porch
With my farewells. Till then, good-night!
You wish the time were now? And I.
You do not blush to wish it so?
You would have blushed yourself to death
To own so much a year ago —
What, both these snowy hands! ah, then
I'll have to say Good-night again!

187. *Memory*

MY mind lets go a thousand things,
Like dates of wars and deaths of kings,
And yet recalls the very hour —
'T was noon by yonder village tower,
And on the last blue noon in May —
The wind came briskly up this way,
Crisping the brook beside the road;
Then, pausing here, set down its load
Of pine-scents, and shook listlessly
Two petals from that wild-rose tree.

188. *Thalia*

A middle-aged lyrical poet is supposed to be taking final leave of the Muse of Comedy. She has brought him his hat and gloves, and is abstractedly picking a thread of gold hair from his coat sleeve as he begins to speak:

I SAY it under the rose —
oh, thanks! — yes, under the laurel,
We part lovers, not foes;
we are not going to quarrel.

We have too long been friends
on foot and in gilded coaches,
Now that the whole thing ends,
to spoil our kiss with reproaches.

I leave you; my soul is wrung;
I pause, look back from the portal —
Ah, I no more am young,
and you, child, you are immortal!

Mine is the glacier's way,
yours is the blossom's weather —
When were December and May
known to be happy together?

Before my kisses grow tame,
before my moodiness grieve you,
While yet my heart is flame,
and I all lover, I leave you.

So, in the coming time,
when you count the rich years over,
Think of me in my prime,
and not as a white-haired lover,

Fretful, pierced with regret,
the wraith of a dead Desire
Thrumming a cracked spinet
by a slowly dying fire.

When, at last, I am cold —
years hence, if the gods so will it —
Say, "He was true as gold,"
and wear a rose in your fillet!

Others, tender as I,
will come and sue for caresses,
Woo you, win you, and die —
mind you, a rose in your tresses!

Some Melpomene woo,
some hold Clio the nearest;
You, sweet Comedy — you
were ever sweetest and dearest!

Nay, it is time to go.
When writing your tragic sister
Say to that child of woe
how sorry I was I missed her.

Really, I cannot stay,
though "parting is such sweet sorrow" . . .
Perhaps I will, on my way
down-town, look in to-morrow!

189. *No Songs in Winter*

THE sky is gray as gray may be,
There is no bird upon the bough,
There is no leaf on vine or tree.

In the Neponset marshes now
Willow-stems, rosy in the wind,
Shiver with hidden sense of snow.

So too 't is winter in my mind,
No light-winged fancy comes and stays:
A season churlish and unkind.

Slow creep the hours, slow creep the days,
The black ink crusts upon the pen —
Wait till the bluebirds and the jays
And golden orioles come again!

190. *"I'll Not Confer with Sorrow"*

I'LL not confer with Sorrow
Till to-morrow;
But Joy shall have her way
This very day.

Ho, eglantine and cresses
For her tresses! —
Let Care, the beggar, wait
Outside the gate.

Tears if you will — but after
Mirth and laughter;
Then, folded hands on breast
And endless rest.

WILLIAM WINTER

1836–1917

191. *Asleep*

HE knelt beside her pillow, in the dead watch of the night,
And he heard her gentle breathing, but her face was still and white,
And on her poor, wan cheek a tear told how the heart can weep,
And he said, "My love was weary — God bless her! she's asleep."

He knelt beside her gravestone in the shuddering autumn night,
And he heard the dry grass rustle, and his face was thin and white,
And through his heart the tremor ran of grief that cannot weep,
And he said, "My love was weary — God bless her! she's asleep."

192. *I. H. B. Died, August 11, 1898*

THE dirge is sung, the ritual said,
No more the brooding organ weeps,
And, cool and green, the turf is spread
On that lone grave where Bromley sleeps.

Gone — in his ripe, meridian hour!
Gone — when the wave was at its crest!
And wayward Humor's perfect flower
Is turned to darkness and to rest.

No more those honest eyes will beam
With torrid light of proud desire;
No more those fluent lips will teem
With Wit's gay quip or Passion's fire.

Forever gone! And with him fade
The dreams that Youth and Friendship know —
The frolic and the glee that made
The golden time of Long Ago.

The golden time! Ah, many a face, —
And his the merriest of them all, —
That made this world so sweet a place,
Is cold and still, beneath the pall.

His was the heart that over-much
In human goodness puts its trust,
And his the keen, satiric touch
That shrivels falsehood into dust.

His love was like the liberal air, —
  Embracing all, to cheer and bless;
And every grief that mortals share
  Found pity in his tenderness.

His subtle vision deeply saw,
  Through piteous webs of human fate,
The motion of the sovereign law,
  On which all tides of being wait.

No sad recluse, no lettered drone,
  His mirthful spirit, blithely poured,
In many a crescent frolic shone, —
  The light of many a festal board.

No pompous pedant, did he feign,
  With dull conceit of learning's store;
But not for him were writ in vain
  The statesman's craft, the scholar's lore.

Fierce for the right, he bore his part
  In strife with many a valiant foe;
But Laughter winged his polished dart,
  And Kindness tempered every blow.

No selfish purpose marked his way;
  Still for the common good he wrought,
And still enriched the passing day
  With sheen of wit and sheaves of thought.

Shrine him, New-England, in thy breast!
  With wild-flowers grace his hallowed bed,
And guard with love his laurelled rest,
  Forever with thy holiest dead!

For not in all the teeming years
Of thy long glory hast thou known
A being framed of smiles and tears,
Humor and force, so like thine own!

And never did thy asters gleam,
Or through thy pines the night-wind roll,
To soothe, in death's transcendent dream,
A sweeter or a nobler soul!

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

1837–1920

193. *Change*[1]

SOMETIMES, when after spirited debate
Of letters or affairs, in thought I go
Smiling unto myself, and all aglow
With some immediate purpose, and elate
As if my little, trivial scheme were great,
And what I would so were already so:
Suddenly I think of her that died, and know,
Whatever friendly or unfriendly fate
Befall me in my hope or in my pride,
It is all nothing but a mockery,
And nothing can be what it used to be,
When I could bid my happy life abide,
And build on earth for perpetuity,
Then, in the deathless days before she died.

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194. *If*[1]

YES, death is at the bottom of the cup,
And every one that lives must drink it up;
And yet between the sparkle at the top
And the black lees where lurks that bitter drop,
There swims enough good liquor, Heaven knows,
To ease our hearts of all their other woes.

The bubbles rise in sunshine at the brim;
That drop below is very far and dim;
The quick fumes spread, and shape us such bright dreams
That in the glad delirium it seems
As though by some deft sleight, if so we willed,
That drop untasted might be somehow spilled.

195. *Hope*[1]

WE sailed and sailed uopn the desert sea
Where for whole days we alone seemed to be.
At last we saw a dim, vague line arise
Between the empty billows and the skies,
That grew and grew until it wore the shape
Of cove and inlet, promontory and cape;
Then hills and valleys, rivers, fields, and woods,
Steeples and roofs, and village neighborhoods.
And then I thought, "Sometime I shall embark
Upon a sea more desert and more dark
Than ever this was, and between the skies
And empty billows I shall see arise
Another world out of that waste and lapse,
Like yonder land. Perhaps — perhaps — perhaps!"

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JOHN BURROUGHS

1837–1921

196. *Waiting*

SERENE, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For, lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it has sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own and draw
The brook that springs in yonder height;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delight.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

JOHN HAY

1838–1905

197. *Jim Bludso*

WALL, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
Becase he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
That you haven't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
The night of the Prairie Belle?

He weren't no saint, — them engineers
Is all pretty much alike, —
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied, —
I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had, —
To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire, —
A thousand times he swore
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
And her day come at last, —
The Movastar was a better boat,
But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.
And so she come tearin' along that night —
The oldest craft on the line —
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clared the bar,
And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned, and made
For that willer-bank on the right.
There was runnin' and cursin', but Jim yelled out,
Over all the infernal roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell, —
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He weren't no saint, — but at jedgment
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.

He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing, —
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a goin' to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

198. *Little Breeches*

I DON'T go much on religion,
I never ain't had no show;
But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,
On the handful o' things I know.
I don't pan out on the prophets
And free-will and that sort of thing, —
But I b'lieve in God and the angels,
Ever sence one night last spring.

I come into town with some turnips,
And my little Gabe come along, —
No four-year-old in the county
Could beat him for pretty and strong, —
Peart and chipper and sassy,
Always ready to swear and fight, —
And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker
Jest to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket
As I passed by Taggart's store;
I went in for a jug of molasses
And left the team at the door.
They scared at something and started, —
I heard one little squall,
And hell-to-split over the prairie
Went team, Little Breeches, and all.

Hell-to-split over the prairie!
I was almost froze with skeer;
But we rousted up some torches,
And sarched for 'em far and near.
At last we struck hosses and wagon,
Snowed under a soft white mound,
Upsot, dead beat, — but of little Gabe
No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me
Of my fellow-critter's aid; —
I jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,
Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

. . . . . .

By this, the torches was played out,
And me and Isrul Parr
Went off for some wood to a sheepfold
That he said was somewhar thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed
Where they shut up the lambs at night.
We looked in and seen them huddled thar,
So warm and sleepy and white;
And thar sot Little Breeches and chirped,
As peart as ever you see,
"I want a chaw of terbacker,
And that's what's the matter of me."

How did he git thar? Angels.
He could never have walked in that storm:
They jest scooped down and toted him
To whar it was safe and warm.

And I think that saving a little child,
And fotching him to his own,
Is a derned sight better business
Than loafing around The Throne.

199. *Religion and Doctrine*

HE stood before the Sanhedrim;
The scowling rabbis gazed at him;
He recked not of their praise or blame;
There was no fear, there was no shame
For one upon whose dazzled eyes
The whole world poured its vast surprise.
The open heaven was too near
His first day's light too sweet and clear,
To let him waste his new-gained ken
On the hate-clouded face of men.

But still they questioned, Who art thou?
What hast thou been? What art thou now?
Thou art not he who yesterday
Sat here and begged beside the way,
For he was blind.

And I am he;
For I was blind, but now I see.
He told the story o'er and o'er;
It was his full heart's only lore;
A prophet on the Sabbath day
Had touched his sightless eyes with clay,

And made him see, who had been blind.
Their words passed by him like the wind
Which raves and howls, but cannot shock
The hundred-fathom-rooted rock.

Their threats and fury all went wide;
They could not touch his Hebrew pride;
Their sneers at Jesus and his band,
Nameless and homeless in the land,
Their boasts of Moses and his Lord,
All could not change him by one word.

I know not what this man may be,
Sinner or Saint; but as for me,
One thing I know, that I am he,
Who once was blind, and now I see.

They were all doctors of renown,
The great men of a famous town,
With deep brows, wrinkled, broad, and wise,
Beneath their wide phylacteries;
The wisdom of the East was theirs,
And honor crowned their silver hairs;
The man they jeered and laughed to scorn
Was unlearned, poor, and humbly born;
But he knew better far than they
What came to him that Sabbath day;
And what the Christ had done for him,
He knew, and not the Sanhedrim.

JAMES RYDER RANDALL

1839–1908

200. *My Maryland*

THE despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland!
His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland!
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle-queen of yore,
Maryland, My Maryland!

Hark to an exiled son's appeal,
Maryland!
My Mother State, to thee I kneel,
Maryland!
For life and death, for woe and weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
Maryland, My Maryland!

Thou wilt not cower in the dust,
Maryland!
Thy beaming sword shall never rust,
Maryland!
Remember Carroll's sacred trust,
Remember Howard's warlike thrust,
And all thy slumbers with the just,
Maryland, My Maryland!

Come! 'tis the red dawn of the day,
Maryland!
Come with thy panoplied array,
Maryland!
With Ringgold's spirit for the fray,
With Watson's blood at Monterey,
With fearless Lowe and dashing May,
Maryland, My Maryland!

Dear Mother, burst the tyrant's chain,
Maryland!
Virginia should not call in vain,
Maryland!
She meets her sisters on the plain, —
"*Sic semper!*" 'tis the proud refrain
That baffles minions back amain,
Maryland!
Arise in majesty again,
Maryland, My Maryland!

Come! for thy shield is bright and strong,
Maryland!
Come! for thy dalliance does thee wrong,
Maryland!
Come to thine own heroic throng
Stalking with Liberty along,
And chant thy dauntless' slogan-song,
Maryland, My Maryland!

I see the blush upon thy cheek,
Maryland!
For thou wast ever bravely meek,
Maryland!

But lo! there surges forth a shriek,
From hill to hill, from creek to creek,
Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
Maryland, My Maryland!

Thou wilt not yield the Vandal toll,
Maryland!
Thou wilt not crook to his control,
Maryland!
Better the fire upon thee roll,
Better the shot, the blade, the bowl,
Than crucifixion of the soul,
Maryland, My Maryland!

I hear the distant thunder hum,
Maryland!
The Old Line's bugle, fife, and drum,
Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb;
Huzza! she spurns the Northern scum!
She breathes! She burns! She'll come! She'll come!
Maryland, My Maryland!

ABRAM JOSEPH RYAN

1839–1886

201. *The Conquered Banner*

FURL that Banner, for 'tis weary;
Round its staff 'tis drooping dreary:
Furl it, fold it, — it is best;
For there's not a man to wave it,

And there's not a sword to save it,
And there's not one left to lave it
In the blood which heroes gave it,
And its foes now scorn and brave it:
Furl it, hide it, — let it rest!

Take that Banner down! 'tis tattered;
Broken is its staff and shattered;
And the valiant hosts are scattered,
Over whom it floated high.
Oh, 'tis hard for us to fold it,
Hard to think there's none to hold it,
Hard that those who once unrolled it
Now must furl it with a sigh!
Furl that Banner — furl it sadly!
Once ten thousands hailed it gladly,
And ten thousands wildly, madly,
Swore it should forever wave;
Swore that foeman's sword should never
Hearts like theirs entwined dissever,
Till that flag should float forever
O'er their freedom or their grave!

Furl it! for the hands that grasped it,
And the hearts that fondly clasped it,
Cold and dead are lying low;
And that Banner — it is trailing,
While around it sounds the wailing
Of its people in their woe.

For, though conquered, they adore it, —
Love the cold, dead hands that bore it,

Weep for those who fell before it,
Pardon those who trailed and tore it;
And oh, wildly they deplore it,
Now to furl and fold it so!

Furl that Banner! True, 'tis gory,
Yet 'tis wreathed around with glory,
And 'twill live in song and story
Though its folds are in the dust!
For its fame on brightest pages,
Penned by poets and by sages,
Shall go sounding down the ages —
Furl its folds though now we must.

Furl that Banner, softly, slowly!
Treat it gently — it is holy,
For it droops above the dead.
Touch it not — unfold it never;
Let it droop there, furled forever, —
For its people's hopes are fled!

BRET HARTE

1839–1902

202. *At the Hacienda*

KNOW I not who thou mayst be
Carved upon this olive-tree, —
"Manuela of La Torre," —
For around on broken walls
Summer sun and spring rain falls,
And in vain the low wind calls
"Manuela of La Torre."

Of that song no words remain
But the musical refrain, —
"Manuela of La Torre."
Yet at night, when winds are still,
Tinkles on the distant hill
A guitar, and words that thrill
Tell to me the old, old story, —
Old when first thy charms were sung,
Old when these old walls were young,
"Manuela of La Torre."

203. *Grizzly*

COWARD, — of heroic size,
In whose lazy muscles lies
Strength we fear and yet despise;
Savage, — whose relentless tusks
Are content with acorn husks;
Robber, — whose exploits ne'er soared
O'er the bee's or squirrel's hoard;
Whiskered chin, and feeble nose,
Claws of steel on baby toes, —
Here, in solitude and shade,
Shambling, shuffling plantigrade,
Be thy courses undismayed!

Here, where Nature makes thy bed,
Let thy rude, half-human tread
Point to hidden Indian springs,
Lost in ferns and fragrant grasses,
Hovered o'er by timid wings,
Where the wood-duck lightly passes,

Where the wild bee holds her sweets,
Epicurean retreats,
Fit for thee, and better than
Fearful spoils of dangerous man.
In thy fat-jowled deviltry
Friar Tuck shall live in thee;
Thou mayest levy tithe and dole;
  Thou shalt spread the woodland cheer,
From the pilgrim taking toll;
  Match thy cunning with his fear;
Eat, and drink, and have thy fill;
Yet remain an outlaw still!

204. *Plain Language from Truthful James*

Table Mountain, 1870.

WHICH I wish to remark,
  And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
  And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
  Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
  And I shall not deny,
In regard to the same,
  What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
  As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand:
It was Euchre. The same
He did not understand;
But he smiled as he sat by the table,
With the smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
At the state of Nye's sleeve,
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
Were quite frightful to see,—
Till at last he put down a right bower,
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,
And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor,—"
And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
In the game "he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
He had twenty-four jacks —
Which was coming it strong,
Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapers, — that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar, —
Which the same I am free to maintain.

205. *Madroño*

CAPTAIN of the Western wood,
Thou that apest Robin Hood!
Green above thy scarlet hose,
How thy velvet mantle shows!
Never tree like thee arrayed,
O thou gallant of the glade!

When the fervid August sun
Scorches all it looks upon,
And the balsam of the pine
Drips from stem to needle fine,
Round thy compact shade arranged,
Not a leaf of thee is changed!

When the yellow autumn sun
Saddens all it looks upon,
Spreads its sackcloth on the hills,
Strews its ashes in the rills,
Thou thy scarlet hose dost doff,
And in limbs of purest buff
Challengest the sombre glade
For a sylvan masquerade.

Where, oh, where, shall he begin
Who would paint thee, Harlequin?
With thy waxen burnished leaf,
With thy branches' red relief,
With thy polytinted fruit, —
In thy spring or autumn suit, —
Where begin, and, oh, where end,
Thou whose charms all art transcend!

ROBERT KELLEY WEEKS

1840–

206. *A Song for Lexington*

THE spring came earlier on
Than usual that year;
The shadiest snow was gone,
The slowest brook was clear,
And warming in the sun
Shy flowers began to peer.

'Twas more like middle May,
The earth so seemed to thrive,
That Nineteenth April day
Of Seventeen Seventy-Five;
Winter was well away,
New England was alive!

Alive and sternly glad!
Her doubts were with the snow;
Her courage, long forbade,
Ran full to overflow;
And every hope she had
Began to bud and grow.

She rose betimes that morn,
For there was work to do;
A planting, not of corn,
Of what she hardly knew,—
Blessings for men unborn;
And well she did it too!

With open hand she stood,
And sowed for all the years,
And watered it with blood,
And watered it with tears,
The seed of quickening food
For both the hemispheres.

This was the planting done
That April morn of fame;
Honor to every one
To that seed-field that came!
Honor to Lexington,
Our first immortal name!

JOAQUIN MILLER

1841–1913

207. *Columbus*

BEHIND him lay the gray Azores,
Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?"
"Why, say, 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
My men grow ghastly wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.

"What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day,
'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said:
"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and say" —
He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
"This mad sea shows his teeth to-night.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Admiral, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck —
A light! A light! A light! A light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on!"

208. — *At the Grave of Walker*

HE lies low in the levelled sand,
Unsheltered from the tropic sun,
And now of all he knew not one
Will speak him fair in that far land.
Perhaps 'twas this that made me seek,
Disguised, his grave one winter-tide;
A weakness for the weaker side,
A siding with the helpless weak.

A palm not far held out a hand,
Hard by a long green bamboo swung,
And bent like some great bow unstrung,
And quivered like a willow wand;
Perched on its fruits that crooked hand,
Beneath a broad banana's leaf,
A bird in rainbow splendor sang
A low, sad song, of tempered grief.

No sod, no sign, no cross nor stone,
But at his side a cactus green
Upheld its lances long and keen;
It stood in sacred sands alone,
Flat-palmed and fierce with lifted spears;
One bloom of crimson crowned its head,
A drop of blood, so bright, so red,
Yet redolent as roses' tears.

In my left hand I held a shell,
All rosy lipped and pearly red;
I laid it by his lowly bed,
For he did love so passing well

The grand songs of the solemn sea.
O shell! sing well, wild, with a will,
When storms blow loud and birds be still,
The wildest sea-song known to thee!

I said some things with folded hands,
Soft whispered in the dim sea-sound,
And eyes held humbly to the ground,
And frail knees sunken in the sands.
He had done more than this for me,
And yet I could not well do more:
I turned me down the olive shore,
And set a sad face to the sea.

209. *Westward Ho!*

WHAT strength! what strife! what rude unrest!
What shocks! what half-shaped armies met!
A mighty nation moving west,
With all its steely sinews set
Against the living forests. Hear
The shouts, the shots of pioneer,
The rended forests, rolling wheels,
As if some half-checked army reels,
Recoils, redoubles, comes again,
Loud-sounding like a hurricane.

O bearded, stalwart, westmost men,
So tower-like, so Gothic built!
A kingdom won without the guilt
Of studied battle, that hath been
Your blood's inheritance. . . . Your heirs
Know not your tombs: the great ploughshares

Cleave softly through the mellow loam
Where you have made eternal home,
And set no sign. Your epitaphs
Are writ in furrows. Beauty laughs
While through the green ways wandering
Beside her love, slow gathering
White, starry-hearted May-time blooms
Above your lowly levelled tombs;
And then below the spotted sky
She stops, she leans, she wonders why
The ground is heaved and broken so,
And why the grasses darker grow
And droop and trail like wounded wing.

Yea, Time, the grand old harvester,
Has gathered you from wood and plain.
We call to you again, again;
The rush and rumble of the car
Comes back in answer. Deep and wide
The wheels of progress have passed on;
The silent pioneer is gone.
His ghost is moving down the trees,
And now we push the memories
Of bluff, bold men who dared and died
In foremost battle, quite aside.

210. *A California Christmas*

BEHOLD where Beauty walks with Peace!
Behold where Plenty pours her horn
Of fruits, of flowers, fat increase,
As generous as light of morn.

Green Shasta, San Diego, seas
Of bloom and green between them rolled.
Great herds in grasses to their knees,
And green earth garmented in gold.

White peaks that prop the sapphire blue
Look down on Edens, such as when
That fair first spot perfection knew,
And God walked perfect earth with men.

I say God's kingdom is at hand
Right here, if we but lift our eyes;
I say there lies no line or land
Between this land and Paradise.

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

1841–1887

211. *The Fool's Prayer*

THE royal feast was done; the King
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried: "Sir Fool,
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before;
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: "O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

"No pity, Lord, could change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool:
The rod must heal the sin; but, Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

"'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
'Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

"These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept —
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung!
The word we had not sense to say —
Who knows how grandly it had rung!

"Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening strips must cleanse them all;
But for our blunders — oh, in shame
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

"Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave, and scourge the tool
That did his will; but Thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The King, and sought his gardens cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
"Be merciful to me, a fool!"

212. *Her Explanation*

SO you have wondered at me, — guessed in vain
What the real woman is you know so well?
I am a lost illusion. Some strange spell
Once made your friend there, with his fine disdain
Of fact, conceive me perfect. He would fain
(But could not) see me always, as befell
His dream to see me, plucking, asphodel
In saffron robes, on some celestial plain.
All that I was he marred and flung away
In quest of what I was not, could not be, —
Lilith, or Helen, or Antigone.
Still he may search; but I have had my day,
And now the Past is all the part for me
That this world's empty stage has left to play.

213. *Opportunity*

THIS I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel —
That blue blade that the king's son bears, — but this
Blunt thing —!" he snapt and flung it from his hand,
And cowering crept away and left the field.

Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

CHARLES GOODRICH WHITING

1842–

214. *Blue Hills Beneath the Haze*

BLUE hills beneath the haze
That broods o'er distant ways,
Whether ye may not hold
Secrets more dear than gold, —
This is the ever new
Puzzle within your blue.

Is't not a softer sun
Whose smiles yon hills have won?
Is't not a sweeter air
That folds the fields so fair?
Is't not a finer rest
That I so fain would test?

The far thing beckons most,
The near becomes the lost.
Not what we have is worth,
But that which has no birth
Or breath within the ken
Of transitory men.

SIDNEY LANIER

1842–1881

215. *Song of the Chattahoochee*

OUT of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide,*
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay,*
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide,*
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,

The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
— Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst —
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call —
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

216. *Opposition*

OF fret, of dark, of thorn, of chill,
Complain no more; for these, O heart,
Direct the random of the will
As rhymes direct the rage of art.

The lute's fixt fret, that runs athwart
The strain and purpose of the string,
For governance and nice consort
Doth bar his wilful wavering.

The dark hath many dear avails;
The dark distils divinest dews;
The dark is rich with nightingales,
With dreams, and with the heavenly Muse.

Bleeding with thorns of petty strife,
I'll ease (as lovers do) my smart
With sonnets to my lady Life
Writ red in issues from the heart.

What grace may lie within the chill
Of favor frozen fast in scorn!
When Good's a-freeze, we call it Ill!
This rosy Time is glacier-born.

Of fret, of dark, of thorn, of chill,
Complain thou not, O heart; for these
Bank-in the current of the will
To uses, arts, and charities.

217. *A Ballad of Trees and the Master*

INTO the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him — last
When out of the woods He came.

218. *Evening Song*

LOOK off, dear Love, across the sallow sands,
And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,
How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.
Ah, longer, longer, we.

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,
And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'Tis done,
Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;
Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted sands.
O night! divorce our sun and sky apart
Never our lips, our hands.

219. *The Stirrup-Cup*

DEATH, thou'rt a cordial old and rare:
Look how compounded, with what care!
Time got his wrinkles reaping thee
Sweet herbs from all antiquity.

David to thy distillage went,
Keats, and Gotama excellent,
Omar Khayyam, and Chaucer bright,
And Shakspere for a king-delight.

Then, Time, let not a drop be spilt:
Hand me the cup whene'er thou wilt;
'Tis thy rich stirrup-cup to me;
I'll drink it down right smilingly.

CHARLES WARREN STODDARD

1843–1909

220. *The Royal Mummy to Bohemia*

WHEREFORE these revels that my dull eyes greet?
These dancers, dancing at my fleshless feet;
The harpers, harping vainly at my ears
Deaf to the world, lo, thrice a thousand years!

Time was when even I was blithe: I knew
The murmur of the flowing wave, where grew
The lean, lithe rushes; I have heard the moan
Of Nilus in prophetic undertone.

My sire was monarch of a mighty race:
Daughter of Pharaoh, I! before my face
Myriads of groveling creatures crawled, to thrust
Their fearful foreheads in the desert dust.

Above me gleamed and glowed my palace walls:
There bloomed my bowers; and there, my waterfalls
Lulled me in languors; slaves with feather flails
Fretted the tranquil air to gentle gales.

O, my proud palms! my royal palms that stood
In stately groups, a queenly sisterhood!
And O, my sphinxes, gazing eye in eye,
Down the dim vistas of eternity!

Where be ye now? And where am I at last?
With gay Bohemia is my portion cast:
Born of the oldest East, I seek my rest
In the fair city of the youngest West.

Farewell, O Egypt! Naught can thee avail:
What tarries now to tell thy sorry tale?
A sunken temple that the sands have hid
The tapering shadow of a pyramid!

And now, my children, harbor me not ill:
I was a princess, am a woman still.
Gibe me no gibes, but greet me at your best,
As I was wont to greet the stranger guest.

Feast well, drink well, make merry while ye may,
For e'en the best of you must pass my way.
The elder as the youngster, fair to see,
Must gird his marble loins and follow me.

221. *The Cocoa-Tree*

CAST on the water by a careless hand,
Day after day the winds persuaded me:
Onward I drifted till a coral tree
Stayed me among its branches, where the sand
Gathered about me, and I slowly grew,
Fed by the constant sun and the inconstant dew.

The sea-birds build their nests against my root,
And eye my slender body's horny case.
Widowed within this solitary place
Into the thankless sea I cast my fruit;
Joyless I thrive, for no man may partake
Of all the store I bear and harvest for his sake.

No more I heed the kisses of the morn;
The harsh winds rob me of the life they gave;
I watch my tattered shadow in the wave,
And hourly droop and nod my crest forlorn,
While all my fibres stiffen and grow numb
Beckoning the tardy ships, the ships that never come!

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY

1844–1890

222. *A White Rose*

THE red rose whispers of passion,
And the white rose breathes of love;
Oh, the red rose is a falcon,
And the white rose is a dove.

But I send you a cream-white rosebud
With a flush on its petal tips;
For the love that is purest and sweetest
Has a kiss of desire on the lips.

223. *A Savage*

DIXON, a Choctaw, twenty years of age,
Had killed a miner in a Leadville brawl;
Tried and condemned, the rough-beards curb their rage,
And watch him stride in freedom from the hall.

"*Return on Friday, to be shot to death!*"
So ran the sentence, — it was Monday night.
The dead man's comrades drew a well-pleased breath;
Then all night long the gambling-dens were bright.

The days sped slowly; but the Friday came,
And flocked the miners to the shooting-ground;
They chose six riflemen of deadly aim,
And with low voices sat and lounged around.

"He will not come." "He's not a fool." "The men
Who set the savage free must face the blame."
A Choctaw brave smiled bitterly, and then
Smiled proudly, with raised head, as Dixon came.

Silent and stern, a woman at his heels,
He motions to the brave, who stays her tread.
Next minute flame the guns, — the woman reels
And drops without a moan: Dixon is dead.

MAURICE THOMPSON

1844–1901

224. *On A Fly-Leaf of Theocritus*

THOSE were good times, in olden days,
Of which the poet has his dreams,
When gods beset the woodland ways,
And lay in wait by all the streams.

One could be sure of something then
Severely simple, simply grand,
Or keenly, subtly sweet, as when
Venus and Love went hand in hand.

Now I would give (such is my need)
All the world's store of rhythm and rhyme
To see Pan fluting on a reed
And with his goat-hoof keeping time!

225. *A Flight Shot*

WE were twin brothers, tall and hale,
Glad wanderers over hill and dale.

We stood within the twilight shade
Of pines that rimmed a Southern glade.

He said: "Let's settle, if we can,
Which of us is the stronger man.

"We'll try a flight shot, high and good,
Across the green glade toward the wood."

And so we bent in sheer delight
Our old yew bows with all our might.

Our long keen shafts, drawn to the head,
Were poised a moment ere they sped.

As we leaned back a breath of air
Mingled the brown locks of our hair.

We loosed. As one our bow-cords rang,
As one away our arrows sprang.

Away they sprang; the wind of June
Thrilled to their softly whistled tune.

We watched their flight, and saw them strike
Deep in the ground slantwise alike,

So far away that they might pass
For two thin straws of broom-sedge grass!

Then arm in arm we doubting went
To find whose shaft was farthest sent,

Each fearing in his loving heart
That brother's shaft had fallen short.

But who could tell by such a plan
Which of us was the stronger man?

There at the margin of the wood,
Side by side our arrows stood,

Their red cock-feathers wing and wing,
Their amber nocks still quivering,

Their points deep-planted where they fell
An inch apart and parallel!

We clasped each other's hands; said he,
"Twin champions of the world are we!"

226. *Wild Honey*

WHERE hints of racy sap and gum
Out of the old dark forest come;

Where birds their beaks like hammers wield,
And pith is pierced, and bark is peeled;

Where the green walnut's outer rind
Gives precious bitterness to the wind;

There lurks the sweet creative power,
As lurks the honey in the flower.

In winter's bud that bursts in spring,
In nut of autumn's ripening,

In acrid bulb beneath the mold,
Sleeps the elixir, strong and old,

That Rosicrucians sought in vain, —
Life that renews itself again!

What bottled perfume is so good
As fragrance of split tulip-wood?

What fabled drink of God or muse
Was rich as purple mulberry juice?

And what school-polished gem of thought
Is like the rune from Nature caught?

He is a poet strong and true
Who loves wild thyme and honey-dew;

And like a brown bee works and sings
With morning freshness on his wings,

And a gold burden on his thighs, —
The pollen-dust of centuries!

227. *Atalanta*

WHEN spring grows old, and sleepy winds
Set from the south with odors sweet,
I see my love in green cool groves
Speed down dusk aisles with shining feet.

She throws a kiss, and bids me run
In accents sweet as roses' breath.
I know I cannot win the race,
And at the end, I know, is death.

Yet joyfully I bare my limbs,
Anoint me with the tropic breeze,
And feel through every sinew thrill
The vigor of Hippomenes.

O race of love, we all have run
Thy happy cause through groves of spring,
And cared not, when at last we lost,
For life or death or any thing.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER

1844–1909

228. *Ode*

I

I AM the spirit of the morning sea;
I am the awakening and the glad surprise;
I fill the skies
With laughter and with light.
Not tears, but jollity
At birth of day brim the strong man-child's eyes.

Behold the white
Wide three-fold beams that from the hidden sun
Rise swift and far, —
One where Orion keeps
His armëd watch, and one
That to the midmost starry heaven upleaps;
The third blots out the firm-fixed Northern Star.
I am the wind that shakes the glittering wave,
Hurries the snowy spume along the shore
And dies at last in some far-murmuring cave.
My voice thou hearest in the breaker's roar —
That sound which never failed since time began,
And first around the world the shining tumult ran.

II

I light the sea and wake the sleeping land.
My footsteps on the hills make music, and my hand
Plays like a harper's on the wind-swept pines.

With the wind and the day
I follow round the world — away! away!
Wide over lake and plain my sunlight shines
And every wave and every blade of grass
Doth know me as I pass;
And me the western sloping mountains know, and me
The far-off, golden sea.

O sea, whereon the passing sun doth lie!
O man, who watchest by that golden sea!
Grieve not, — O grieve not thou, but lift thine eye
And see me glorious in the sunset sky!

III

I love not the night
Save when the stars are bright,
Or when the moon
Fills the white air with silence like a tune.
Yea, even the night is mine
When the Northern Lights outshine,
And all the wild heavens throb in ecstasy divine; —
Yea, mine deep midnight, though the black sky lowers,
When the sea burns white and breaks on the shore in
starry showers.

IV

I am the laughter of the new-born child
On whose soft-breathing sleep an angel smiled.
And I all sweet first things that are:
First songs of birds, not perfect as at last, —
Broken and incomplete, —
But sweet, oh, sweet!
And I the first faint glimmer of a star
To the wrecked ship that tells the storm is past;
The first keen smells and stirrings of the Spring;
First snow-flakes, and first May-flowers after snow;
The silver glow
Of the new moon's ethereal ring;
The song the morning stars together made,
And the first kiss of lovers under the first June shade.

V

My sword is quick, my arm is strong to smite
In the dread joy and fury of the fight.

I am with those who win, not those who fly;
With those who live I am, not those who die.
Who die? Nay, nay, that word
Where I am is unheard;
For I am the spirit of youth that cannot change,
Nor cease, nor suffer woe;
And I am the spirit of beauty that doth range
Through natural forms and motions, and each show
Of outward loveliness. With me have birth
All gentleness and joy in all the earth.
Raphael knew me, and showed the world my face;
Me Homer knew, and all the singing race, —
For I am the spirit of light, and life, and mirth.

229. *The Celestial Passion*

O WHITE and midnight sky! O starry bath!
Wash me in thy pure, heavenly, crystal flood;
Cleanse me, ye stars, from earthly soil and scath;
Let not one taint remain in spirit or blood!
Receive my soul, ye burning, awful deeps;
Touch and baptize me with the mighty power
That in ye thrills, while the dark planet sleeps;
Make me all yours for one blest, secret hour!
O glittering host! O high angelic choir!
Silence each tone that with thy music jars;
Fill me even as an urn with thy white fire
Till all I am is kindred to the stars!
Make me thy child, thou infinite, holy night —
So shall my days be full of heavenly light!

230. *I Count My Time by Times That I Meet Thee*

I COUNT my time by times that I meet thee;
These are my yesterdays, my morrows, noons,
And nights; these my old moons and my new moons.
Slow fly the hours, or fast the hours do flee,
If thou art far from or art near to me:
If thou art far, the bird tunes are no tunes;
If thou art near, the wintry days are Junes, —
Darkness is light, and sorrow cannot be.
Thou art my dream come true, and thou my dream;
The air I breathe, the world wherein I dwell;
My journey's end thou art, and thou the way;
Thou art what I would be, yet only seem;
Thou art my heaven and thou art my hell;
Thou art my ever-living judgment-day.

231. *On the Life-Mask of Lincoln*

THIS bronze doth keep the very form and mould
Of our great martyr's face. Yes, this is he:
That brow all wisdom, all benignity;
That human, humorous mouth; those cheeks that hold
Like some harsh landscape all the summer's gold;
That spirit fit for sorrow, as the sea
For storms to beat on; the lone agony
Those silent, patient lips too well foretold.
Yes, this is he who ruled a world of men
As might some prophet of the elder day —
Brooding above the tempest and the fray
With deep-eyed thought and more than mortal ken.
A power was his beyond the touch of art
Or armëd strength — his pure and mighty heart.

GLORY and honor and fame and everlasting laudation
For our captains who loved not war, but fought for the life of the nation;
Who knew that, in all the land, one slave meant strife, not peace;
Who fought for freedom, not glory; made war that war might cease.

Glory and honor and fame; the beating of muffled drums;
The wailing funeral dirge, as the flag-wrapped coffin comes;
Fame and honor and glory; and joy for a noble soul,
For a full and splendid life, and laurelled rest at the goal.

Glory and honor and fame; the pomp that a soldier prizes;
The league-long waving line as the marching falls and rises;
Rumbling of caissons and guns; the clatter of horses' feet,
And a million awe-struck faces far down the waiting street.

But better than martial woe, and the pageant of civic sorrow;
Better than praise of to-day, or the statue we build to-morrow;
Better than honor and glory, and history's iron pen,
Was the thought of duty done and the love of his fellow-men.

JOHN BANISTER TABB

1845–1909

233. *Evolution*

OUT of the dusk a shadow,
Then, a spark;
Out of the cloud a silence,
Then, a lark;
Out of the heart a rapture,
Then, a pain;
Out of the dead, cold ashes,
Life again.

234. *Anonymous*

ANONYMOUS — nor needs a name
To tell the secret whence the flame,
With light, and warmth, and incense, came
A new creation to proclaim.

So was it when, His labor done,
God saw His work, and smiled thereon:
His glory in the picture shone,
But name upon the canvas, none.

235. *Clover*

LITTLE masters, hat in hand
Let me in your presence stand,
Till your silence solve for me
This your threefold mystery.

Tell me — for I long to know —
How, in darkness there below,
Was your fairy fabric spun,
Spread and fashioned, three in one.

Did your gossips gold and blue,
Sky and Sunshine, choose for you,
Ere your triple forms were seen,
Suited liveries of green?

Can ye, — if ye dwelt indeed
Captives of a prison seed, —
Like the Genie, once again
Get you back into the grain?

Little masters, may I stand
In your presence, hat in hand,
Waiting till you solve for me
This your threefold mystery?

236. *A Child's Prayer*

MAKE me, dear Lord, polite and kind
To every one, I pray.
And may I ask you how you find
Yourself, dear Lord, to-day?

JOHN HENRY BONER

1845–1903

237. *Poe's Cottage at Fordham*

HERE lived the soul enchanted
By melody of song;
Here dwelt the spirit haunted
By a demoniac throng;
Here sang the lips elated;
Here grief and death were sated;
Here loved and here unmated
Was he, so frail, so strong.

Here wintry winds and cheerless
The dying firelight blew,
While he whose song was peerless
Dreamed the drear midnight through,
And from dull embers chilling
Crept shadows darkly filling
The silent place, and thrilling
His fancy as they grew.

Here, with brow bared to heaven,
In starry night he stood,
With the lost star of seven
Feeling sad brotherhood.
Here in the sobbing showers
Of dark autumnal hours
He heard suspected powers
Shriek through the stormy wood.

From visions of Apollo
And of Astarte's bliss,
He gazed into the hollow
And hopeless vale of Dis;
And though earth were surrounded
By heaven, it still was mounded
With graves. His soul had sounded
The dolorous abyss.

Proud, mad, but not defiant,
He touched at heaven and hell.
Fate found a rare soul pliant
And rung her changes well.
Alternately his lyre,
Stranded with strings of fire,
Led earth's most happy choir,
Or flashed with Israfel.

No singer of old story
Luting accustomed lays,
No harper for new glory,
No mendicant for praise,
He struck high chords and splendid,
Wherein were fiercely blended
Tones that unfinished ended
With his unfinished days.

Here through this lowly portal,
Made sacred by his name,
Unheralded immortal
The mortal went and came.

And fate that then denied him,
And envy that decried him,
And malice that belied him,
Have cenotaphed his fame.

JOSEPH I. C. CLARKE

1846–1925

238. *The Fighting Race*

"READ out the names!" and Burke sat back,
And Kelly drooped his head.
While Shea — they call him Scholar Jack —
Went down the list of the dead.
Officers, seamen, gunners, marines,
The crews of the gig and yawl,
The bearded man and the lad in his teens,
Carpenters, coal passers — all.
Then, knocking the ashes from out his pipe,
Said Burke in an offhand way:
"We're all in that dead man's list, by Cripe!
Kelly and Burke and Shea."
"Well, here's to the Maine, and I'm sorry for Spain,"
Said Kelly and Burke and Shea.

"Wherever there's Kellys there's trouble," said Burke.
"Wherever fighting's the game,
Or a spice of danger in grown man's work,"
Said Kelly, "you'll find my name."
"And do we fall short," said Burke, getting mad,
"When it's touch and go for life?"
Said Shea, "It's thirty-odd years, bedad,
Since I charged to drum and fife

Up Marye's Heights, and my old canteen
Stopped a rebel ball on its way.
There were blossoms of blood on our sprigs of green —
Kelly and Burke and Shea —
And the dead didn't brag." "Well, here's to the flag!"
Said Kelly and Burke and Shea.

"I wish't was in Ireland, for there's the place,"
Said Burke, "that we'd die by right,
In the cradle of our soldier race,
After one good stand-up fight.
My grandfather fell on Vinegar Hill,
And fighting was not his trade;
But his rusty pike's in the cabin still,
With Hessian blood on the blade."
"Aye, aye," said Kelly, "the pikes were great
When the word was 'clear the way!'
We were thick on the roll in ninety-eight —
Kelly and Burke and Shea."
"Well, here's to the pike and the sword and the like!"
Said Kelly and Burke and Shea.

And Shea, the scholar, with rising joy,
Said, "We were at Ramillies;
We left our bones at Fontenoy
And up in the Pyrenees;
Before Dunkirk, on Landen's plain,
Cremona, Lille, and Ghent,
We're all over Austria, France, and Spain,
Wherever they pitched a tent.
We've died for England from Waterloo
To Egypt and Dargai;

And still there's enough for a corps or crew,
Kelly and Burke and Shea."
"Well, here is to good honest fighting blood!"
Said Kelly and Burke and Shea.

"Oh, the fighting races don't die out,
If they seldom die in bed,
For love is first in their hearts, no doubt,"
Said Burke; then Kelly said:
"When Michael, the Irish Archangel, stands,
The angel with the sword,
And the battle-dead from a hundred lands
Are ranged in one big horde,
Our line, that for Gabriel's trumpet waits,
Will stretch three deep that day,
From Jehoshaphat to the Golden Gates —
Kelly and Burke and Shea."
"Well, here's thank God for the race and the sod!"
Said Kelly and Burke and Shea.

JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE

1847–1908

239. *The Kearsarge*

IN the gloomy ocean bed
Dwelt a formless thing, and said,
In the dim and countless eons long ago,
"I will build a stronghold high,
Ocean's power to defy,
And the pride of haughty man to lay low."

Crept the minutes for the sad,
Sped the cycles for the glad,
But the march of time was neither less nor more;
While the formless atom died,
Myriad millions by its side,
And above them slowly lifted Roncador.

Roncador of Carribee,
Coral dragon of the sea,
Ever sleeping with his teeth below the wave;
Woe to him who breaks the sleep!
Woe to them who sail the deep!
Woe to ship and man that fear a shipman's grave!

Hither many a galleon old,
Heavy-keeled with guilty gold,
Fled before the hardy rover smiting sore;
But the sleeper silent lay
Till the preyer and his prey
Brought their plunder and their bones to Roncador.

Be content, O conqueror!
Now our bravest ship of war,
War and tempest who had often braved before,
All her storied prowess past,
Strikes her glorious flag at last
To the formless thing that builded Roncador.

HENRY AUGUSTIN BEERS

1847–1926

240. *Ecce in Deserto*

THE wilderness a secret keeps
  Upon whose guess I go:
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard;
  And yet I know, I know,

Some day the viewless latch will lift,
  The door of air swing wide
To one lost chamber of the wood
  Where those shy mysteries hide, —

One yet unfound, receding depth,
  From which the wood-thrush sings,
Still luring in to darker shades,
  In — in to colder springs.

There is no wind abroad to-day.
  But hark! — the pine-tops' roar,
That sleep and in their dreams repeat
  The music of the shore.

What wisdom in their needles stirs?
  What song is that they sing?
Those airs that search the forest's heart,
  What rumor do they bring?

A hushed excitement fills the gloom,
  And, in the stillness, clear
The vireo's tell-tale warning rings:
  "'Tis near — 'tis near — 'tis near!"

As, in the fairy-tale, more loud
  The ghostly music plays
When, toward the enchanted bower, the prince
  Draws closer through the maze.

Nay — nay. I track a fleeter game,
  A wilder than ye know,
To lairs beyond the inmost haunt
  Of thrush or vireo.

This way it passed: the scent lies fresh;
  The ferns still lightly shake.
Ever I follow hard upon,
  But never overtake.

To other woods the trail leads on,
  To other worlds and new,
Where they who keep the secret here
  Will keep the promise too.

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

1853–1922

241. *Uncle Gabe's White Folks*

SARVENT, Marster! Yes, sah, dat's me —
  Ole Unc' Gabe's my name;
I thankee, Marster, I'm 'bout, yo' see.
  "An' de ole 'ooman? " She's much de same,
Po'ly an' 'plainin', thank de Lord!
But de Marster's gwine ter come back from 'broad.

"Fine ole place? " Yes, sah, 'tis so;
An' mighty fine people my white folks war —
But you ought ter 'a' seen it years ago,
When de Marster an' de Mistis lived up dyah;
When de niggers'd stan' all roun' de do',
Like grains o' corn on de cornhouse flo.'

"Live mons'ous high? " Yes, Marster, yes;
Cut 'n' onroyal 'n' gordly dash;
Eat an' drink till you couldn' res'.
My folks war 'n' none o' yo' po'-white-trash;
No, sah, dey was ob high degree —
Dis heah nigger am quality!

"Tell you 'bout 'em? " You mus' 'a' hearn
'Bout my ole white folks, sho'!
I tell you, suh, dey was gre't an' stern;
D' didn' have nuttin' at all to learn;
D' knowed all dar was to know;
Gol' ober de' head an' onder dey feet;
An' silber! dey sowed 't like folks sows wheat.

"Use ter be rich? " Dat warn' de wud!
Jes' wallowed an' roll' in wealf.
Why, none o' my white folks ever stir'd
Ter lif' a han' for d'self;
De niggers use ter be stan'in' roun'
Jes' d' same ez leaves when dey fus' fall down;
De stable-stalls up heah at home
Looked like teef in a fine-toof comb;
De cattle was p'digious — mus' tell de fac'!
An' de hogs mecked de hillsides look like black;

An' de flocks ob sheep was so gre't an' white
Dey 'peared like clouds on a moonshine night.
An' when my ole Mistis use' ter walk —
Jes' ter her kerridge (dat was fur
Ez ever she walked) — I tell you, sir,
You could almos' heah her silk dress talk;
Hit use' ter soun' like de mornin' breeze,
When it wakes an' rustles de Gre't House trees.
An' de Marster's face! — de Marster's face,
Whenever de Marster got right pleased —
Well, I 'clar' ter Gord, 't would shine wid grace
De same ez his countenance had been greased.
De cellar, too, had de bes' ob wine,
An' brandy, an' sperrits dat yo' could fine;
An' ev'ything in dyah was stored,
'Skusin' de glory of de Lord!

"Warn' dyah a son? " Yes, sah, you knows
He's de young Marster now;
But we heah dat dey tooken he very clo'es
Ter pay what ole Marster owe;
He's done been gone ten year, I s'pose.
But he's comin' back some day, of co'se;
An' my ole 'ooman is aluz pyard,
An' meckin' de Blue-Room baid,
An' ev'y day dem sheets is ayard,
An' will be till *she's* daid;
An' de styars she'll scour,
An' dat room she'll ten',
Ev'y blessed day dat de Lord do sen'!

What say, Marster? Yo' say, you knows? —
  He's young an' slender-like an' fyah;
Better-lookin' 'n you, of co'se!
Hi! you's he? 'Fo Gord, 'tis him!
  'Tis de very voice an' eyes an' hyah,
An' mouf an' smile, on'y yo' ain' so slim —
I wonder whah — whah's de ole 'ooman?
Now let my soul
  Depart in peace,
For I behol'
Dy glory, Lord! — I knowed you, chile —
  I knowed you soon's I see'd your face!
Whar has you been dis blessed while?
  Done come back an' buy de place?
  Oh, bless de Lord for all his grace!
De ravins shell hunger, an' shell not lack,
De Marster, de young Marster's done come back!

242. *Ashcake*

WELL, yes, sir, dat am a comical name —
  It are so, for a fac' —
But I knowed one, down in Ferginyer,
  Could 'a' toted dat on its back.

"What was it?" I'm gwine to tell you —
  'Twas mons'us long ago:
'Twas "Ashcake," sah; an' all on us
  Use' ter call 'im jes' "Ashcake," so.

You see, sir, my ole Marster, he
  Was a pow'ful wealfy man,
Wid mo' plantations dan hyahs on you haid —
  Gre't acres o' low-groun' lan'.

Jeems River bottoms, dat used ter stall
  A fo'-hoss plough, no time;
An' he'd knock you down ef you jes' had dyared
  Ter study 'bout guano 'n' lime.

De corn used ter stan' in de row dat thick
  You jes' could follow de balk;
An' rank! well, I 'clar 'ter de king, I'se seed
  Five 'coons up a single stalk!

He owned mo' niggers 'n arr' a man
  About dyar, black an' bright;
He owned so many, b'fo' de Lord,
  He didn' know all by sight!

Well, sir, one evelin', long to'ds dusk,
  I seen de Marster stan'
An' watch a yaller boy pass de gate
  Wid a ashcake in his han'.

He never had no mammy at all —
  Leastways, she was daid by dat —
An' de cook an' de hands about on de place
  Used ter see dat de boy kep' fat.

Well, he trotted along down de parf dat night,
  An' de Marster he seen him go,
An' hollered, "Say, boy — say, what's yer name?"
  "A — ashcake, sir," says Joe.

It 'peared ter tickle de Marster much,
An' he called him up to de do'.
"Well, dat is a curisome name," says he;
"But I guess it suits you, sho'."

"Whose son are you? " de Marster axed.
"Young Jane's," says Joe; "she's daid."
A sperrit cudden 'a' growed mo' pale,
An' "By Gord! " I heerd him said.

He tuk de child 'long in de house,
Jes' 'count o' dat ar whim;
An', dat-time-out, you never see
Sich sto' as he sot by him.

An' Ashcake swung his cradle, too,
As clean as ever you see;
An' stuck as close ter ole Marster's heel
As de shadder sticks to de tree.

'Twel one dark night, when de river was out,
De Marster an' Ashcake Joe
Was comin' home an' de skiff upsot,
An' Marster 'd' 'a' drownded, sho',

Excusin' dat Ashcake cotch'd him hard
An' gin him holt o' de boat,
An' saved him so; but 't was mo'n a week
B'fo' *his* body comed afloat.

An' de Marster he grieved so 'bouten dat thing,
It warn' long, sah, befo' he died;
An' he's sleep, way down in Ferginyer,
Not fur from young Ashcake's side.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY

1848–1922

243. *The Happiest Heart*

WHO drives the horses of the sun
Shall lord it but a day;
Better the lowly deed were done,
And kept the humble way.

The rust will find the sword of fame,
The dust will hide the crown;
Ay, none shall nail so high his name
Time will not tear it down.

The happiest heart that ever beat
Was in some quiet breast
That found the common daylight sweet,
And left to Heaven the rest.

244. *The Strong*

DOST deem him weak that owns his strength is tried?
Nay, we may safely lean on him that grieves:
The pine has immemorially sighed,
The enduring poplar's are the trembling leaves.

To feel, and bow the head, is not to fear;
To cheat with jest — that is the coward's art:
Beware the laugh that battles back the tear;
He's false to all that's traitor to his heart.

He of great deeds does grope amid the throng
  Like him whose steps toward Dagon's temple bore;
There's ever something sad about the strong —
  A look, a moan, like that on ocean's shore.

EMMA LAZARUS

1849–1887

245. *The Banner of the Jew*

WAKE, Israel, wake! Recall to-day
  The glorious Maccabean rage,
The sire heroic, hoary-gray,
  His five-fold lion-lineage;
The Wise, the Elect, the Help-of-God,
The Burst-of-spring, the Avenging Rod.

From Mizpeh's mountain-ridge they saw
  Jerusalem's empty streets, her shrine
Laid waste where Greeks profaned the Law
  With idol and with pagan sign.
Mourners in tattered black were there,
With ashes sprinkled on their hair.

Then from the stony peak there rang
  A blast to ope the graves: down poured
The Maccabean clan, who sang
  Their battle-anthem to the Lord.
Five heroes lead, and, following, see
Ten thousand rush to victory!

Oh for Jerusalem's trumpet now,
To blow a blast of shattering power,
To wake the sleepers high and low,
And rouse them to the urgent hour!
No hand for vengeance — but to save,
A million naked swords should wave.

Oh deem not dead that martial fire,
Say not the mystic flame is spent!
With Moses' law and David's lyre,
Your ancient strength remains unbent.
Let but an Ezra rise anew,
To lift the *Banner of the Jew!*

A rag, a mock at first — erelong,
When men have bled and women wept,
To guard its precious folds from wrong,
Even they who shrunk, even they who slept,
Shall leap to bless it, and to save.
Strike! for the brave revere the brave!

246. *The Crowing of the Red Cock*

ACROSS the Eastern sky has glowed
The flicker of a blood-red dawn;
Once more the clarion cock has crowed,
Once more the sword of Christ is drawn.
A million burning roof-trees light
The world-wide path of Israel's flight.

Where is the Hebrew's fatherland?
The folk of Christ is sore bestead;
The Son of Man is bruised and banned,
Nor finds whereon to lay his head.
His cup is gall, his meat is tears,
His passion lasts a thousand years.

Each crime that wakes in man the beast,
Is visited upon his kind.
The lust of mobs, the greed of priest,
The tyranny of kings, combined
To root his seed from earth again,
His record is one cry of pain.

When the long roll of Christian guilt
Against his sires and kin is known,
The flood of tears, the life-blood spilt,
The agony of ages shown,
What oceans can the stain remove
From Christian law and Christian love?

Nay, close the book; not now, not here,
The hideous tale of sin narrate;
Reëchoing in the martyr's ear,
Even he might nurse revengeful hate,
Even he might turn in wrath sublime,
With blood for blood and crime for crime.

Coward? Not he, who faces death,
Who singly against worlds has fought,
For what? A name he may not breathe,
For liberty of prayer and thought.
The angry sword he will not whet,
His nobler task is — to forget.

FRANCIS SALTUS SALTUS

1849–1889

247. *Pastel*

AMONG the priceless gems and treasures rare
Old Versailles shelters in its halls sublime,
I can recall one faded image fair,
A girl's sad face, praised once in every clime.
Poets have sung, in rich and happy rhyme,
Her violet eyes, the wonder of her hair.
An art-bijou it was, but dimmed by time,
A dreamy pastel of La Valliere!
I, too, remember in my heart a face
Whose charm I deemed would ever with me dwell;
But as the days went by, its peerless grace
Fled like those dreams that blooming dawn dispel,
Till of its beauty there was left no trace,
Time having blurred it like that pale pastel!

248. *The Sphinx Speaks*

CARVED by a mighty race whose vanished hands
Formed empires more destructible than I,
In sultry silence I forever lie,
Wrapped in the shifting garment of the sands.
Below me, Pharaoh's scintillating bands
With clashings of loud cymbals have passed by,
And the eternal reverence of the sky
Falls royally on me and all my lands.

The record of the future broods in me;
I have with worlds of blazing stars been crowned,
But none my subtle mystery hath known
Save one, who made his way through blood and sea,
The Corsican, prophetic and renowned,
To whom I spake, one awful night alone!

249. *The Bayadere*

NEAR strange, weird temples, where the Ganges' tide
Bathes domed Lahore, I watched, by spice-trees fanned,
Her agile form in some quaint saraband,
A marvel of passionate chastity and pride.
Nude to the loins, superb and leopard-eyed,
With fragrant roses in her jewelled hand,
Before some Kaât-drunk Rajah, mute and grand,
Her flexile body bends, her white feet glide.
The dull Kinoors throb one monotonous tune,
And wail with zeal as in a hasheesh trance;
Her scintillant eyes in vague, ecstatic charm
Burn like black stars below the Orient moon,
While the suave, dreamy languor of the dance
Lulls the grim, drowsy cobra on her arm.

EUGENE FIELD

1850–1895

250. *Little Boy Blue*

THE little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair;
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise!"
So, toddling off to his trundle-bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;
And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue —
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true!

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face;
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.

251. *Nightfall in Dordrecht*

THE mill goes toiling slowly around
With steady and solemn creak,
And my little one hears in the kindly sound
The voice of the old mill speak.
While round and round those big white wings
Grimly and ghostlike creep,
My little one hears that the old mill sings
"Sleep, little tulip, sleep!"

The sails are reefed and the nets are drawn,
And, over his pot of beer,
The fisher, against the morrow's dawn,
Lustily maketh cheer.
He mocks at the winds that caper along
From the far-off clamorous deep, —
But we — we love their lullaby song
Of "Sleep, little tulip, sleep!"

Old dog Fritz in slumber sound
Groans of the stony mart:
To-morrow how proudly he'll trot you round,
Hitched to our new milk-cart!
And you shall help me blanket the kine
And fold the gentle sheep,
And set the herring a-soak in brine, —
But now, little tulip, sleep!

A Dream-One comes to button the eyes
That wearily droop and blink,
While the old mill buffets the frowning skies
And scolds at the stars that wink;

Over your face the misty wings
Of that beautiful Dream-One sweep,
And rocking your cradle she softly sings
"Sleep, little tulip, sleep!"

252. *Dibdin's Ghost*

DEAR wife, last midnight, whilst I read
The tomes you so despise,
A spectre rose beside the bed,
And spake in this true wise:
"From Canaan's beatific coast
I've come to visit thee,
For I am Frognall Dibdin's ghost,"
Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

I bade him welcome, and we twain
Discussed with buoyant hearts
The various things that appertain
To bibliomaniac arts.
"Since you are fresh from t'other side,
Pray tell me of that host
That treasured books before they died,"
Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

"They've entered into perfect rest;
For in the life they've won
There are no auctions to molest,
No creditors to dun.
Their heavenly rapture has no bounds
Beside that jasper sea;
It is a joy unknown to Lowndes,"
Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

Much I rejoiced to hear him speak
Of biblio-bliss above,
For I am one of those who seek
What bibliomaniacs love.
"But tell me, for I long to hear
What doth concern me most,
Are wives admitted to that sphere?"
Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

"The women folk are few up there;
For 'twere not fair, you know,
That they our heavenly joy should share
Who vex us here below.
The few are those who have been kind
To husbands such as we;
They knew our fads, and didn't mind,"
Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

"But what of those who scold at us
When we would read in bed?
Or, wanting victuals, make a fuss
If we buy books instead?
And what of those who've dusted not
Our motley pride and boast, —
Shall they profane that sacred spot?"
Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

"Oh, no! they tread that other path,
Which leads where torments roll,
And worms, yes, bookworms, vent their wrath
Upon the guilty soul.

Untouched of bibliomaniac grace,
That saveth such as we,
They wallow in that dreadful place,"
Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

"To my dear wife will I recite
What things I've heard you say;
She'll let me read the books by night
She's let me buy by day.
For we together by and by
Would join that heavenly host;
She's earned a rest as well as I,"
Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP

1851–1898

253. *Keenan's Charge*

I

THE sun had set;
The leaves with dew were wet:
Down fell a bloody dusk
On the woods, that second of May,
Where Stonewall's corps, like a beast of prey,
Tore through, with angry tusk.

"They've trapped us, boys!"
Rose from our flank a voice.
With a rush of steel and smoke
On came the rebels straight,
Eager as love and wild as hate;
And our line reeled and broke:

Broke and fled.
No one stayed — but the dead!
With curses, shrieks, and cries,
Horses and wagons and men
Tumbled back through the shuddering glen,
And above us the fading skies.

There's one hope still, —
Those batteries parked on the hill!
" Battery, wheel! " (mid the roar)
" Pass pieces; fix prolonge to fire
Retiring. Trot! " In the panic dire
A bugle rings " Trot! " — and no more.

The horses plunged,
The cannon lurched and lunged,
To join the hopeless rout.
But suddenly rode a form
Calmly in front of the human storm,
With a stern, commanding shout:

" Align those guns! "
(We knew it was Pleasonton's.)
The cannoneers bent to obey,
And worked with a will at his word:
And the black guns moved as if *they* had heard.
But ah the dread delay!

" To wait is crime;
O God, for ten minutes' time! "
The General looked around.

There Keenan sat, like a stone,
With his three hundred horse alone,
Less shaken than the ground.

"Major, your men?"
"Are soldiers, General." "Then
Charge, Major! Do your best:
Hold the enemy back, at all cost,
Till my guns are placed, — else the army is lost.
You die to save the rest!"

II

By the shrouded gleam of the western skies,
Brave Keenan looked into Pleasonton's eyes
For an instant, — clear, and cool, and still;
Then, with a smile, he said: "I will."

"Cavalry, charge!" Not a man of them shrank.
Their sharp, full cheer, from rank on rank,
Rose joyously, with a willing breath, —
Rose like a greeting hail to death.
Then forward they sprang, and spurred and clashed;
Shouted the officers, crimson-sashed;
Rode well the men, each brave as his fellow,
In their faded coats of the blue and yellow;
And above in the air, with an instinct true,
Like a bird of war their pennon flew.

With clank of scabbards and thunder of steeds,
And blades that shine like sunlit reeds,

And strong brown faces bravely pale
For fear their proud attempt shall fail,
Three hundred Pennsylvanians close
On twice ten thousand gallant foes.

Line after line the troopers came
To the edge of the wood that was ringed with flame;
Rode in and sabred and shot — and fell;
Nor came one back his wounds to tell.
And full in the midst rose Keenan, tall
In the gloom, like a martyr awaiting his fall,

While the circle-stroke of his sabre, swung
'Round his head, like a halo there, luminous hung.
Line after line — ay, whole platoons,
Struck dead in their saddles — of brave dragoons
By the maddened horses were onward borne
And into the vortex flung, trampled and torn;
As Keenan fought with his men, side by side.
So they rode, till there were no more to ride.

But over them, lying there, shattered and mute,
What deep echo rolls? — 'Tis a death-salute
From the cannon in place; for, heroes, you braved
Your fate not in vain: the army was saved!

Over them now — year following year —
Over their graves the pine-cones fall,
And the whippoorwill chants his spectre-call;
But they stir not again; they raise no cheer:
They have ceased. But their glory shall never cease,
Nor their light be quenched in the light of peace.
The rush of their charge is resounding still
That saved the army at Chancellorsville.

EDWIN MARKHAM

1852–

254. *The Man with the Hoe*

God made man in His own image, in the image of God made He him. — GENESIS.

Written after seeing the Painting by Millet

BOWED by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the Dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And pillared the blue firmament with light?
Down all the stretch of Hell to its last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this —
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed —
More filled with signs and portents for the soul —
More fraught with menace to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?

What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings —
With those who shaped him to the thing he is —
When this dumb Terror shall reply to God,
After the silence of the centuries?

255. *The Invisible Bride*

THE low-voiced girls that go
In gardens of the Lord,
Like flowers of the field they grow
In sisterly accord.

Their whispering feet are white
Along the leafy ways;
They go in whirls of light
Too beautiful for praise.

And in their band forsooth
Is one to set me free —
The one that touched my youth —
The one God gave to me.

She kindles the desire
Whereby the gods survive —
The white ideal fire
That keeps my soul alive.

Now at the wondrous hour,
She leaves her star supreme,
And comes in the night's still power,
To touch me with a dream.

Sibyl of mystery
On roads unknown to men,
Softly she comes to me,
And goes to God again.

HENRY VAN DYKE

1852-

256. *An Angler's Wish*

I

WHEN tulips bloom in Union Square,
And timid breaths of vernal air
Go wandering down the dusty town,
Like children lost in Vanity Fair;

When every long, unlovely row
Of westward houses stands aglow,
And leads the eyes towards sunset skies
Beyond the hills where green trees grow, —

Then weary seems the street parade,
And weary books, and weary trade:
I'm only wishing to go a-fishing;
For this the month of May was made.

II

I guess the pussy-willows now
Are creeping out on every bough
Along the brook; and robins look
For early worms behind the plough.

The thistle-birds have changed their dun
For yellow coats, to match the sun;
And in the same array of flame
The dandelion show's begun.

The flocks of young anemones
Are dancing round the budding trees:
  Who can help wishing to go a-fishing
In days as full of joy as these?

III

I think the meadow-lark's clear sound
Leaps upward slowly from the ground,
  While on the wing the blue-birds ring
Their wedding-bells to woods around.

The flirting chewink calls his dear
Behind the bush; and very near,
  Where water flows, where green grass grows,
Song-sparrows gently sing, "Good cheer."

And, best of all, through twilight's calm
The hermit-thrush repeats his psalm.
  How much I'm wishing to go a-fishing
In days so sweet with music's balm!

IV

'Tis not a proud desire of mine;
I ask for nothing superfine;
  No heavy weight, no salmon great,
To break the record — or my line:

Only an idle little stream,
Whose amber waters softly gleam,
  Where I may wade, through woodland shade,
And cast the fly, and loaf, and dream:

Only a trout or two, to dart
From foaming pools, and try my art:
No more I'm wishing — old-fashioned fishing,
And just a day on Nature's heart.

257. *The Veery*

THE moonbeams over Arno's vale in silver flood were pouring,
When first I heard the nightingale a long-lost love deploring.
So passionate, so full of pain, it sounded strange and eerie;
I longed to hear a simpler strain, — the wood-notes of the veery.

The laverock sings a bonny lay above the Scottish heather;
It sprinkles down from far away like light and love together;
He drops the golden notes to greet his brooding mate, his dearie;
I only know one song more sweet, — the vespers of the veery.

In English gardens, green and bright and full of fruity treasure,
I heard the blackbird with delight repeat his merry measure:
The ballad was a pleasant one, the tune was loud and cheery,
And yet, with every setting sun, I listened for the veery.

But far away, and far away, the tawny thrush is singing;
New England woods, at close of day, with that clear chant are ringing:
And when my light of life is low, and heart and flesh are weary,
I fain would hear, before I go, the wood-notes of the veery.

258. *The Maryland Yellow-throat*

WHILE May bedecks the naked trees
With tassels and embroideries,
And many blue-eyed violets beam
Along the edges of the stream,
I hear a voice that seems to say,
Now near at hand, now far away,
"*Witchery — witchery — witchery.*"

An incantation so serene,
So innocent, befits the scene:
There's magic in that small bird's note —
See, there he flits — the yellow-throat:
A living sunbeam, tipped with wings,
A spark of light that shines and sings
"*Witchery — witchery — witchery.*"

You prophet with a pleasant name,
If out of Mary-land you came,
You know the way that thither goes
Where Mary's lovely garden grows:

Fly swiftly back to her, I pray,
And try, to call her down this way,
"*Witchery — witchery — witchery!*"

Tell her to leave her cockle-shells,
And all her little silver bells
That blossom into melody,
And all her maids less fair than she.
She does not need these pretty things,
For everywhere she comes, she brings
"*Witchery — witchery — witchery!*"

The woods are greening overhead,
The flowers adorn each mossy bed;
The waters babble as they run —
One thing is lacking, only one:
If Mary were but here to-day,
I would believe your charming lay,
"*Witchery — witchery — witchery!*"

Along the shady road I look —
Who's coming now across the brook?
A woodland maid, all robed in white —
The leaves dance round her with delight,
The stream laughs out beneath her feet —
Sing, merry bird, the charm's complete,
"*Witchery — witchery — witchery!*"

RICHARD KENDALL MUNKITTRICK

1853–1911

259. *At the Shrine*

A PALE Italian peasant,
Beside the dusty way,
Upon this morning pleasant
Kneels in the sun to pray.

Silent in her devotion,
With fervent glance she pleads;
Her fingers' only motion,
Telling her amber beads.

Dreaming of ilex bowers
Beyond the purple brine,
Once more she sees the flowers
Bloom at the wayside shrine.

And, while the mad crowd jostles,
She, with a visage sweet,
Prays where the bisque apostles
Are sold on Barclay Street.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

1849–1916

260. *The Old Man and Jim*

OLD man never had much to say —
'Ceptin' to Jim, —
And Jim was the wildest boy he had,
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!
Never heerd him speak but once
Er twice in my life, — and first time was

When the army broke out, and Jim he went,
The old man backin' him, fer three months;
And all 'at I heerd the old man say
Was, jes' as we turned to start away, —
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

'Peared like he was more satisfied
Jes' *lookin'* at Jim
And likin' him all to hisse'f-like, see? —
'Cause he was jes' wrapped up in him!
And over and over I mind the day
The old man come and stood round in the way
While we was drillin', a-watchin' Jim;
And down at the deepot a-heerin' him say, —
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Never was nothin' about the farm
Disting'ished Jim;
Neighbors all ust to wonder why
The old man 'peared wrapped up in him:
But when Cap. Biggler, he writ back
'At Jim was the bravest boy we had
In the whole dern regiment, white er black,
And his fightin' good as his farmin' bad, —
'At he had led, with a bullet clean
Bored through his thigh, and carried the flag
Through the bloodiest battle you ever seen, —
The old man wound up a letter to him
'At Cap. read to us, 'at said, — "Tell Jim good-by;
And take keer of hisse'f!"

Jim come home jes' long enough
To take the whim
'At he'd like to go back in the calvery —
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!
Jim 'lowed 'at he'd had sich luck afore,
Guessed he'd tackle her three years more.
And the old man give him a colt he'd raised,
And followed him over to Camp Ben Wade,
And laid around fer a week er so,
Watchin' Jim on dress-parade;
'Tel finally he rid away,
And last he heerd was the old man say, —
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Tuk the papers, the old man did,
A-watchin' fer Jim,
Fully believin' he'd make his mark
Some way — jes' wrapped up in him!
And many a time the word 'ud come
'At stirred him up like the tap of a drum:
At Petersburg, fer instunce, where
Jim rid right into their cannons there,
And tuk 'em, and p'inted 'em t' other way,
And socked it home to the boys in gray,
As they skooted fer timber, and on and on —
Jim a lieutenant, — and one arm gone, —
And the old man's words in his mind all day, —
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Think of a private, now, perhaps,
We'll say like Jim,
'At's clumb clean up to the shoulder-straps —
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!
Think of him — with the war plum' through,
And the glorious old Red-White-and-Blue
A-laughin' the news down over Jim,
And the old man, bendin' over him —
The surgeon turnin' away with tears
'At hadn't leaked fer years and years,
As the hand of the dyin' boy clung to
His Father's, the old voice in his ears, —
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

261. *A Life-Lesson*

THERE! little girl, don't cry!
They have broken your doll, I know;
And your tea-set blue,
And your play-house, too,
Are things of the long ago;
But childish troubles will soon pass by. —
There! little girl, don't cry!

There! little girl, don't cry!
They have broken your slate, I know;
And the glad, wild ways
Of your school-girl days
Are things of the long ago;
But life and love will soon come by. —
There! little girl, don't cry!

There! little girl, don't cry!
They have broken your heart, I know;
And the rainbow gleams
Of your youthful dreams
Are things of the long ago;
But Heaven holds all for which you sigh. —
There! little girl, don't cry!

262. *On the Death of Little Mahala Ashcraft*

"LITTLE Haly! Little Haly!" cheeps the robin in the tree;
"Little Haly!" sighs the clover, "Little Haly!" moans the bee;
"Little Haly! Little Haly!" calls the kill-deer at twilight;
And the katydids and crickets hollers "Haly!" all the night.

The sunflowers and the hollyhawks droops over the garden fence;
The old path down the garden-walks still holds her footprints' dents;
And the well-sweep's swingin' bucket seems to wait fer her to come
And start it on its wortery errant down the old bee-gum.

The bee-hives all is quiet; and the little Jersey steer,
When any one comes nigh it, acts so lonesome-like and queer;

And the little Banty chickens kindo' cutters faint and low,
Like the hand that now was feedin' 'em was one they didn't know.
They's sorrow in the wavin' leaves of all the apple-trees;
And sorrow in the harvest-sheaves, and sorrow in the breeze;
And sorrow in the twitter of the swallers 'round the shed;
And all the song her red-bird sings is "Little Haly's dead!"

The medder 'pears to miss her, and the pathway through the grass,
Whare the dewdrops ust to kiss her little bare feet as she passed;
And the old pin in the gate-post seems to kindo'-sorto' doubt
That Haly's little sunburnt hands 'll ever pull it out.

Did her father er her mother ever love her more'n me,
Er her sisters er her brother prize her love more tendurly?
I question — and what answer? — only tears, and tears alone,
And ev'ry neghbor's eyes is full o' teardrops as my own.

"Little Haly! Little Haly!" cheeps the robin in the tree;
"Little Haly!" sighs the clover; "Little Haly!" moans the bee;
"Little Haly! Little Haly!" calls the kill-deer at twilight,
And the katydids and crickets hollers "Haly!" all the night.

263. *Bereaved*

LET me come in where you sit weeping, — ay,
Let me, who have not any child to die,
Weep with you for the little one whose love
I have known nothing of.

The little arms that slowly, slowly loosed
Their pressure round your neck; the hands you used
To kiss. — Such arms — such hands I never knew.
May I not weep with you?

Fain would I be of service — say something,
Between the tears, that would be comforting, —
But ah! so sadder than yourselves am I,
Who have no child to die.

264. *Little Orphant Annie*

LITTLE Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
An' wash the cups and saucers up, an' brush the crumbs away,
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an' sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board-an'-keep;
An' all us other children, when the supper things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

Onc't they was a little boy wouldn't say his pray'rs —
An' when he went to bed at night, away up stairs,
His mammy heerd him holler, an' his daddy heerd him bawl,
An' when they turn't the kivvers down, he wasn't there at all!
An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an' press,
An' seeked him up the chimbly-flue, an' ever'wheres, I guess;
But all they ever found was thist his pants an' roundabout!
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,
An' make fun of ever' one, an' all her blood-an'-kin;
An' onc't when they was "company," an' ole folks was there,
She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't care!
An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide,
They was two great big Black Things a-standin' by her side,
An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed what she's about!
An' the Gobble-uns 'll get you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
An' the lampwick sputters, an' the wind goes woo-oo!
An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,
An' the lightnin' bugs in dew is all squenched away, —
You better mind yer parents, and yer teachers fond and dear,
An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,
An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the Gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

265. *Old John Henry*

OLD John's jes' made o' the commonest stuff —
Old John Henry —
He's tough, I reckon, — but none too tough —
Too tough though's better than not enough!
Says old John Henry.
He does his best, and when his best's bad,
He don't fret none, ner he don't git sad —
He simply 'lows it's the best he had:
Old John Henry —

His doctern's jes' o' the plainest brand —
Old John Henry —
A smilin' face and a hearty hand
'S religen 'at all folks understand,
Says old John Henry.

He's stove up some with the rhumatiz,
And they hain't no shine on them shoes o' his,
And his hair hain't cut — but his eye-teeth is:
Old John Henry!

He feeds hisse'f when the stock's all fed —
Old John Henry —
And sleeps like a babe when he goes to bed —
And dreams o' heaven and home-made bread,
Says old John Henry.

He hain't refined as he'd ort to be
To fit the statutes o' poetry,
Ner his clothes don't fit him — but *he* fits *me:*
Old John Henry.

266. *A Man by the Name of Bolus*

A MAN by the name of Bolus — (all 'at we'll ever know
Of the stranger's name, I reckon — and I'm kindo' glad it's so!) —
Got off here, Christmas morning, looked 'round the town, and then
Kindo' sized up the folks, I guess, and — went away again!

The fac's is, this man Bolus got " run in," Christmas-day;
The town turned out to see it, and cheered, and blocked the way;
And they dragged him 'fore the Mayor — fer he couldn't er wouldn't walk —
And socked him down fer trial — though he couldn't er wouldn't talk!

Drunk? They was no doubt of it! — W'y, the marshal
of the town
Laughed and testified 'at he fell *up*-stairs 'stid o' *down!*
This man by the name of Bolus? — W'y, he even drapped
his jaw
And snored on through his "hearin'" — drunk as you
ever saw!

One feller spit in his boot-leg, and another 'n' drapped a
small
Little chunk o' ice down his collar, — but he didn't wake
at all!
And they all nearly split when his Honor said, in one of
his witty ways,
To "chalk it down fer him, 'Called away — be back in
thirty days!'"

That's where this man named Bolus slid, kindo' like in a
fit,
Flat on the floor; and — drat my ears! — I hear 'em
a-laughin' yit!
Somebody fetched Doc Sifers from jest across the hall, —
And all Doc said was, "Morphine! We're too late!" and
that's all!

That's how they found his name out — piece of a letter
'at read:
"Your wife has lost her reason, and little Nathan's
dead —
Come ef you kin, — fergive *her* — but Bolus, as fer *me*,
This hour I send a bullet through where my heart *ort* to
be!"

Man by the name of Bolus! — As his revilers broke
Fer the open air, 'peared like, to me, I heard a voice 'at spoke —
Man by the name of Bolus! git up from where you lay —
Git up and smile white at 'em with your hands crossed thataway!

267. *An Old Sweetheart*

AS one who cons at evening o'er an album all alone,
And muses on the faces of the friends that he has known,
So I turn the leaves of fancy till, in shadowy design,
I find the smiling features of an old sweetheart of mine.

The lamplight seems to glimmer with a flicker of surprise,
As I turn it low to rest me of the dazzle in my eyes,
And light my pipe in silence, save a sigh that seems to yoke
Its fate with my tobacco and to vanish with the smoke.

'Tis a fragrant retrospection — for the loving thoughts that start
Into being are like perfume from the blossom of the heart;
And to dream the old dreams over is a luxury divine —
When my truant fancy wanders with that old sweetheart of mine.

Though I hear, beneath my study, like a fluttering of wings,
The voices of my children, and the mother as she sings,
I feel no twinge of conscience to deny me any theme
When Care has cast her anchor in the harbor of a dream.

In fact, to speak in earnest, I believe it adds a charm
To spice the good a trifle with a little dust of harm —
For I find an extra flavor in memory's mellow wine
That makes me drink the deeper to that old sweetheart of mine.

A face of lily beauty, with a form of airy grace,
Floats out of my tobacco as the genii from the vase;
And I thrill beneath the glances of a pair of azure eyes
As glowing as the summer and as tender as the skies.

I can see the pink sunbonnet and the little checkered dress
She wore when first I kissed her and she answered the caress
With the written declaration that, "as surely as the vine
Grew round the stump," she loved me — that old sweetheart of mine.

And again I feel the pressure of her slender little hand,
As we used to talk together of the future we had planned —
When I should be a poet, and with nothing else to do
But write the tender verses that she set the music to:

When we should live together in a cozy little cot
Hid in a nest of roses, with a fairy garden-spot
Where the vines were ever fruited, and the weather ever fine,
And the birds were ever singing for that old sweetheart of mine:

When I should be her lover forever and a day,
And she my faithful sweetheart till the golden hair was gray;
And we should be so happy that when either's lips were dumb
They would not smile in Heaven till the other's kiss had come.

But, ah! my dream is broken by a step upon the stair,
And the door is softly opened, and — my wife is standing there;
Yet with eagerness and rapture all my visions I resign
To greet the living presence of that old sweetheart of mine.

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

1855-

268. *At Gibraltar*

I

ENGLAND, I stand on thy imperial ground,
Not all a stranger; as thy bugles blow,
I feel within my blood old battles flow, —
The blood whose ancient founts in thee are found.

Still surging dark against the Christian bound
Wide Islam presses; well its peoples know
Thy heights that watch them wandering below;
I think how Lucknow heard their gathering sound.
I turn, and meet the cruel, turbaned face.
England, 'tis sweet to be so much thy son!
I feel the conqueror in my blood and race;
Last night Trafalgar awed me, and to-day
Gibraltar wakened; hark, thy evening gun
Startles the desert over Africa!

II

Thou art the rock of empire, set mid-seas
Between the East and West, that God has built;
Advance thy Roman borders where thou wilt,
While run thy armies true with his decrees;
Law, justice, liberty, — great gifts are these:
Watch that they spread where English blood is spilt,
Lest, mixed and sullied with his country's guilt,
The soldier's life-stream flow, and Heaven displease!
Two swords there are: one naked, apt to smite,
Thy blade of war; and, battle-storied, one
Rejoices in the sheath, and hides from light.
American I am; would wars were done!
Now westward, look, my country bids good-night, —
Peace to the world from ports without a gun!

HENRY CUYLER BUNNER

1855–1896

269. *The Way to Arcady*

OH, what's the way to Arcady,
To Arcady, to Arcady;
Oh, what's the way to Arcady,
Where all the leaves are merry?

Oh, what's the way to Arcady?
The spring is rustling in the tree, —
The tree the wind is blowing through, —
It sets the blossoms flickering white.
I knew not skies could burn so blue
Nor any breezes blow so light.
They blow an old-time way for me,
Across the world to Arcady.

Oh, what's the way to Arcady?
Sir Poet, with the rusty coat,
Quit mocking of the song-bird's note.
How have you heart for any tune,
You with the wayworn russet shoon?
Your scrip, a-swinging by your side,
Gapes with a gaunt mouth hungry-wide.
I'll brim it well with pieces red,
If you will tell the way to tread.

Oh, I am bound for Arcady,
And if you but keep pace with me
You tread the way to Arcady.

And where away lies Arcady,
And how long yet may the journey be?

Ah, that (quoth he) *I do not know:*
Across the clover and the snow —
Across the frost, across the flowers —
Through summer seconds and winter hours,
I've trod the way my whole life long,
And know not now where it may be;
My guide is but the stir to song,
That tells me I cannot go wrong,
Or clear or dark the pathway be
Upon the road to Arcady.

But how shall I do who cannot sing?
I was wont to sing, once on a time, —
There is never an echo now to ring
Remembrance back to the trick of rhyme.

'Tis strange you cannot sing (quoth he), —
The folk all sing in Arcady.

But how may he find Arcady
Who hath nor youth nor melody?

What, know you not, old man (quoth he), —
Your hair is white, your face is wise, —
That Love must kiss that Mortal's eyes
Who hopes to see fair Arcady?
No gold can buy you entrance there;
But beggared Love may go all bare —
No wisdom won with weariness;
But Love goes in with Folly's dress —
No fame that wit could ever win;
But only Love may lead Love in
To Arcady, to Arcady.

Ah, woe is me, through all my days
  Wisdom and wealth I both have got,
And fame and name, and great men's praise;
  But Love, ah Love! I have it not.
There was a time, when life was new —
  But far away and half forgot —
I only know her eyes were blue;
  But Love — I fear I knew it not.
We did not wed, for lack of gold,
And she is dead, and I am old.
All things have come since then to me,
Save Love, ah Love! and Arcady.

Ah, then I fear we part (quoth he), —
My way's for Love and Arcady.

But you, you fare alone, like me;
  The gray is likewise in your hair.
  What love have you to lead you there,
To Arcady, to Arcady?

Ah, no, not lonely do I fare;
  My true companion's Memory.
With Love he fills the Spring-time air;
  With Love he clothes the Winter tree.
Oh, past this poor horizon's bound
  My song goes straight to one who stands, —
Her face all gladdening at the sound, —
  To lead me to the Spring-green lands,
To wander with enlacing hands.

The songs within my breast that stir
Are all of her, are all of her.
My maid is dead long years (quoth he), —
She waits for me in Arcady.

Oh, yon's the way to Arcady,
To Arcady, to Arcady;
Oh, yon's the way to Arcady,
Where all the leaves are merry.

270. *To a Dead Woman*

NOT a kiss in life; but one kiss, at life's end,
I have set on the face of Death in trust for thee.
Through long years keep it fresh on thy lips, O friend!
At the gate of Silence give it back to me.

271. *Strong as Death*

O DEATH, when thou shalt come to me
From out thy dark, where she is now,
Come not with graveyard smell on thee,
Or withered roses on thy brow.

Come not, O Death, with hollow tone,
And soundless step, and clammy hand —
Lo, I am now no less alone
Than in thy desolate, doubtful land;

But with that sweet and subtle scent
That ever clung about her (such
As with all things she brushed was blent);
And with her quick and tender touch.

With the dim gold that lit her hair,
Crown thyself, Death; let fall thy tread
So light that I may dream her there,
And turn upon my dying bed.

And through my chilling veins shall flame
My love, as though beneath her breath;
And in her voice but call my name,
And I will follow thee, O Death.

272. *Triumph*

THE dawn came in through the bars of the blind, —
And the winter's dawn is gray, —
And said, "However you cheat your mind,
The hours are flying away."

A ghost of a dawn, and pale, and weak, —
"Has the sun a heart," I said,
"To throw a morning flush on the cheek
Whence a fairer flush has fled?"

As a gray rose-leaf that is fading white
Was the cheek where I set my kiss;
And on that side of the bed all night
Death had watched, and I on this.

I kissed her lips, they were half apart,
Yet they made no answering sign;
Death's hand was on her failing heart,
And his eyes said, "She is mine."

I set my lips on the blue-veined lid,
Half-veiled by her death-damp hair;
And oh, for the violet depths it hid
And the light I longed for there!

Faint day and the fainter life awoke,
And the night was overpast;
And I said, "Though never in life you spoke,
Oh, speak with a look at last!"

For the space of a heart-beat fluttered her breath,
As a bird's wing spread to flee;
She turned her weary arms to Death,
And the light I longed for there!

HARRISON SMITH MORRIS

1856–

273. *Always*

IS love, then only liking
That lasts while beauty is;
Or while the clock is striking
Forgetful hours of bliss?

Is love the cheek that wrinkles,
The eye that saddens, oh —
Is love the star that twinkles
But with the dawn must go?

Ah, happy, who have found it
In other measure made,
With tender ties around it
And tranquil with the shade;

With hope and home and laughter
And — whether beauty stay
Or blacken with the rafter —
A true love all the way.

EDWARD SANFORD MARTIN

1856–

274. *A Girl of Pompeii*

A PUBLIC haunt they found her in:
She lay asleep, a lovely child;
The only thing left undefiled
Where all things else bore taint of sin.

Her charming contours fixed in clay
The universal law suspend,
And turn Time's chariot back, and blend
A thousand years with yesterday.

A sinless touch, austere yet warm,
Around her girlish figure pressed,
Caught the sweet imprint of her breast,
And held her, surely clasped, from harm.

Truer than work of sculptor's art
Comes this dear maid of long ago,
Sheltered from woeful chance, to show
A spirit's lovely counterpart,

And bid mistrustful men be sure
That form shall fate of flesh escape,
And, quit of earth's corruptions, shape
Itself, imperishably pure.

FRANK LEBBY STANTON

1857–1927

275. *A Plantation Ditty*

DE gray owl sing fum de chimbly top:
"Who — who — is — you-oo? "
En I say: "Good Lawd, hit's des po' me,
En I ain't quite ready fer de Jasper Sea;
I'm po' en sinful, en you 'lowed I'd be;
Oh, wait, good Lawd, 'twell ter-morror! "

De gray owl sing fum de cypress tree:
"Who — who — is — you-oo? "
En I say: "Good Lawd, ef you look you'll see
Hit ain't nobody but des po' me,
En I like ter stay 'twell my time is free;
Oh, wait, good Lawd, 'twell ter-morror! "

276. *A Little Way*

A LITTLE way to walk with you, my own —
Only a little way,
Then one of us must weep and walk alone
Until God's day.

A little way! It is so sweet to live
Together, that I know
Life would not have one withered rose to give
If one of us should go.

And if these lips should ever learn to smile,
With thy heart far from mine,
'Twould be for joy that in a little while
They would be kissed by thine!

CHARLES HENRY LUDERS

1858–1891

277. *The Four Winds*

WIND of the North,
Wind of the Norland snows,
Wind of the winnowed skies, and sharp, clear stars, —
Blow cold and keen across the naked hills,
And crisp the lowland pools with crystal films,
And blur the casement squares with glittering ice,
But go not near my love.

Wind of the West,
Wind of the few, far clouds,
Wind of the gold and crimson sunset lands, —
Blow fresh and pure across the peaks and plains,
And broaden the blue spaces of the heavens,
And sway the grasses and the mountain pines,
But let my dear one rest.

Wind of the East,
Wind of the sunrise seas,
Wind of the clinging mists and gray, harsh rains, —
Blow moist and chill across the wastes of brine,
And shut the sun out, and the moon and stars,
And lash the boughs against the dripping eaves,
Yet keep thou from my love.

But thou, sweet wind!
Wind of the fragrant South,
Wind from the bowers of jasmine and of rose, —
Over magnolia blooms and lilied lakes
And flowering forests come with dewy wings,
And stir the petals at her feet, and kiss
The low mound where she lies.

RICHARD BURTON

1861–

278. *Black Sheep*

FROM their folded mates they wander far,
Their ways seem harsh and wild:
They follow the beck of a baleful star,
Their paths are dream-beguiled.

Yet haply they sought but a wider range,
Some loftier mountain slope,
And little recked of the country strange
Beyond the gates of hope.

And haply a bell with a luring call
  Summoned their feet to tread
Midst the cruel rocks, where the deep pitfall
  And the lurking snare are spread.

Maybe, in spite of their tameless days
  Of outcast liberty,
They're sick at heart for the homely ways
  Where their gathered brothers be.

And oft at night, when the plains fall dark
  And the hills loom large and dim,
For the shepherd's voice they mutely hark,
  And their souls go out to him.

Meanwhile, " Black sheep! black sheep! " we cry,
  Safe in the inner fold;
And maybe they hear, and wonder why,
  And marvel, out in the cold.

279. *The Forefather*

HERE at the country inn,
  I lie in my quiet bed,
And the ardent onrush of armies
  Throbs and throbs in my head.

Why, in this calm, sweet place,
  Where only silence is heard,
Am I 'ware of the crash of conflict, —
  Is my blood to battle stirred?

Without, the night is blessed
With the smell of pines, with stars;
Within, is the mood of slumber,
The healing of daytime scars.

'Tis strange, — yet I am thrall
To epic agonies;
The tumult of myriads dying
Is borne to me on the breeze.

Mayhap in the long ago
My forefather grim and stark
Stood in some hell of carnage,
Faced forward, fell in the dark;

And I, who have always known
Peace with her dove-like ways,
Am gripped by his martial spirit
Here in the after days.

I cannot rightly tell:
I lie, from all stress apart,
And the ardent onrush of armies
Surges hot through my heart.

WALLACE RICE

1859–

280. *Under the Stars*

TELL me what sail the seas
Under the stars?
Ships, and ships' companies,
Off to the wars.

Steel are the ship's great sides,
  Steel are her guns,
Backward she thrusts the tides,
  Swiftly she runs;

Steel is the sailor's heart,
  Stalwart his arm,
His the Republic's part
  Through cloud and storm.

Tell me what standard rare
  Streams from the spars?
Red stripes and white they bear,
  Blue, with bright stars:

Red for brave hearts that burn
  With liberty,
White for the peace they earn
  Making men free,

Stars for the Heaven above, —
  Blue for the deep,
Where, in their country's love,
  Heroes shall sleep.

Tell me why on the breeze
  These banners blow?
Ships, and ships' companies,
  Eagerly go

Warring, like all our line,
  Freedom to friend
Under this starry sign,
  True to the end.

WALLACE RICE

Fair is the Flag's renown,
Sacred her scars,
Sweet the death she shall crown
Under the stars.

ROBERT MOWRY BELL

1860–

281. *The Second Volume*

IN the groined alcoves of an ancient tower
Amid a wealth of treasured tomes I found
A little book, in choicest vellum bound:
Therein a romance of such magic power
It held me rapt through many a trancëd hour;
And then, the threads of interest all unwound,
Abruptly closed. I searched that palace round,
And for its mate still earth's preserves I scour.
Perchance that was the whole? Then purposeless
The pain of conflict, and the bitter doubt
But half resolved; love in a dire distress,
Deserted, baffled, with its joy left out.
Could life so end, half told; its school so fail?
Soul, soul, there is a sequel to thy tale!

HAMLIN GARLAND

1860–

282. *The Ute Lover*

BENEATH the burning brazen sky,
The yellowed tepees stand.
Not far away a singing river
Sets through the sand.

Within the shadow of a lonely elm tree
The tired ponies keep.
The wild land, throbbing with the sun's hot magic,
Is rapt as sleep.

From out a clump of scanty willows
A low wail floats, —
The endless repetition of a lover's
Melancholy notes,
So sad, so sweet, so elemental,
All lovers' pain
Seems borne upon its sobbing cadence, —
The love-song of the plain.
From frenzied cry forever falling,
To the wind's wild moan,
It seems the voice of anguish calling
Alone! alone!

Caught from the winds forever moaning
On the plain,
Wrought from the agonies of woman
In maternal pain,
It holds within its simple measure
All death of joy,
Breathed though it be by smiling maiden
Or lithe brown boy.

It hath this magic, sad though its cadence
And short refrain —
It helps the exiled people of the mountain
Endure the plain;

For when at night the stars a-glitter
Defy the moon,
The maiden listens, leans to seek her lover
Where waters croon.

Flute on, O lithe and tuneful Utah, —
Reply, brown jade;
There are no other joys secure to either
Man or maid.
Soon you are old and heavy-hearted,
Lost to mirth;
While on you lies the white man's gory
Greed of earth.

Strange that to me that burning desert
Seems so dear.
The endless sky and lonely mesa,
Flat and drear,
Calls me, calls me as the flute of Utah
Calls his mate, —
This wild, sad, sunny, brazen country,
Hot as hate.

Again the glittering sky uplifts star-blazing;
Again the stream
From out the far-off snowy mountains
Sings through my dream;
And on the air I hear the flute-voice calling
The lover's croon,
And see the listening, longing maiden
Lit by the moon.

283. *Do You Fear the Wind?*

DO you fear the force of the wind,
The slash of the rain?
Go face them and fight them,
Be savage again.
Go hungry and cold like the wolf,
Go wade like the crane:
The palms of your hands will thicken,
The skin of your cheek will tan,
You'll grow ragged and weary and swarthy,
But you'll walk like a man!

284. *The Gold-Seekers*

I SAW these dreamers of dreams go by,
I trod in their footsteps a space;
Each marched with his eyes on the sky,
Each passed with a light on his face.

They came from the hopeless and sad,
They faced the future and gold;
Some the tooth of want's wolf had made mad,
And some at the forge had grown old.

Behind them these serfs of the tool
The rags of their service had flung;
No longer of fortune the fool,
This word from each bearded lip rung:

" Once more I'm a man, I am free!
No man is my master, I say;
To-morrow I fail, it may be, —
No matter, I'm freeman to-day."

They go to a toil that is sure,
To despair and hunger and cold;
Their sickness no warning can cure,
They are mad with a longing for gold.

The light will fade from each eye,
The smile from each face;
They will curse the impassable sky,
And the earth when the snow torrents race.

Some will sink by the way and be laid
In the frost of the desolate earth;
And some will return to a maid,
Empty of hand as at birth.

But this out of all will remain,
They have lived and have tossed;
So much in the game will be gain,
Though the gold of the dice has been lost.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN

1860–1916

285. *On A Greek Vase*

DIVINELY shapen cup, thy lip
Unto me seemeth thus to speak:
" Behold in me the workmanship,
The grace and cunning of a Greek!

"Long ages since he mixed the clay,
Whose sense of symmetry was such,
The labor of a single day
Immortal grew beneath his touch.

"For dreaming while his fingers went
Around this slender neck of mine,
The form of her he loved was blent
With every matchless curve and line.

"Her loveliness to me he gave
Who gave unto herself his heart,
That love and beauty from the grave
Might rise and live again in art."

And hearing from thy lips this tale
Of love and skill, of art and grace,
Thou seem'st to me no more the frail
Memento of an older race:

But in thy form divinely wrought
And figured o'er with fret and scroll,
I dream, by happy chance was caught,
And dwelleth now, that maiden's soul.

286. *To a Rose*

GO, Rose, and in her golden hair
You shall forget the garden soon;
The sunshine is a captive there
And crowns her with a constant noon.

And when your spicy odor goes,
And fades the beauty of your bloom,
Think what a lovely hand, O Rose,
Shall place your body in the tomb!

287. *The Library*

GIVE me the room whose every nook
Is dedicated to a book:
Two windows will suffice for air
And grant the light admission there, —
One looking to the south, and one
To speed the red, departing sun.
The eastern wall from frieze to plinth
Shall be the Poet's labyrinth,
Where one may find the lords of rhyme
From Homer's down to Dobson's time;
And at the northern side a space
Shall show an open chimney-place,
Set round with ancient tiles that tell
Some legend old, and weave a spell
About the firedog-guarded seat,
Where, musing, one may taste the heat:
Above, the mantel should not lack
For curios and bric-à-brac, —
Not much, but just enough to light
The room up when the fire is bright.
The volumes on this wall should be
All prose and all philosophy,
From Plato down to those who are
The dim reflections of that star;

And these tombs all should serve to show
How much we write — how little know;
For since the problem first was set
No one has ever solved it yet.
Upon the shelves along the west
The scientific books shall rest;
Beside them, History; above, —
Religion, — hope, and faith, and love:
Lastly, the southern wall should hold
The story-tellers, new and old;
Haroun al Raschid, who was truth
And happiness to all my youth,
Shall have the honored place of all
That dwell upon the sunny wall;
And with him there shall stand a throng
Of those who help mankind along
More by their fascinating lies
Than all the learning of the wise.

Such be the library; and take
This motto of a Latin make
To grace the door through which I pass:
Hic habitat Felicitas!

CLINTON SCOLLARD

1860–

288. *Sidney Godolphin*

THEY rode from the camp at morn
With clash of sword and spur.
The birds were loud in the thorn,
The sky was an azure blur.

A gallant show they made
That warm noontide of the year,
Led on by a dashing blade,
By the poet-cavalier.

They laughed through the leafy lanes,
The long lanes of Dartmoor;
And they sang their soldier strains,
Pledged "death" to the Roundhead boor;
Then they came at the middle day
To a hamlet quaint and brown
Where the hated troopers lay,
And they cheered for the King and crown.

They fought in the fervid heat,
Fought fearlessly and well,
But low at the foeman's feet
Their valorous leader fell.
Full on his fair young face
The blinding sun beat down;
In the morn of his manly grace
He died for the King and crown.

Oh the pitiless blow,
The vengeance-thrust of strife,
That blotted the golden glow
From the sky of his glad, brave life!
The glorious promise gone; —
Night with its grim black frown!
Never again the dawn,
And all for the King and crown.

Hidden his sad fate now
In the sealëd book of the years;
Few are the heads that bow,
Or the eyes that brim with tears,
Reading 'twixt blots and stains
From a musty tome that saith
How he rode through the Dartmoor lanes
To his woful, dauntless death.

But I, in the summer's prime,
From that lovely leafy land
Look back to the olden time
And the leal and loyal band.
I see them dash along, —
I hear them charge and cheer,
And my heart goes out in a song
To the poet-cavalier.

289. *Memnon*

WHY dost thou hail with songful lips no more
The glorious sunrise? — Why is Memnon mute,
Whose voice was tuned as is the silvery flute
When Thebes sat queenly by the Nile's low shore?
The chained slaves sweat no longer at the oar,
No longer shrines are raised to man and brute,
Yet dawn by dawn the sun thou didst salute
Gives thee the greeting that it gave of yore.
What nameless spell is on thee? Dost thou wait
(Hoping and yearning through the years forlorn)

The old-time splendor and the regal state,
The glory and the power of empire shorn?
Oh, break the silence deep, defying fate,
And cry again melodious to the morn!

290. *"There is a Pool on Garda"*

THERE is a pool on Garda,
'Tis fashioned by the moon
That climbs above the mountain's crest
What time the night birds croon;
The pool is paved with silver
Inwrought with burnished gold,
And in its deeps a treasure sleeps
The goblins stored of old.

There is a pool on Garda,
It will elude you still
Ply you the oar from shore to shore
With howe'er strong a will;
'Twill flee you like a phantom,
'Twill lead you on and on;
A luring light, 'twill fade from sight
What time the moon is gone.

There is a pool on Garda,
You'll see it in your dreams;
'Tis shaped of silvery glamor,
'Tis fused of golden beams.
Once you have caught the vision,
The fair elusive ray,
'Twill haunt your brain like some sweet strain
Forever and a day!

291. *The Sleeper*

ABOVE the cloistral valley,
Above the druid rill,
There lies a quiet sleeper
Upon a lonely hill.

All the long days of summer
The low winds whisper by,
And the soft voices of the leaves
Make murmurous reply.

All the long eves of autumn
The long shadows mass
Round this sequestered slumbering-place
Beneath the cool hill grass.

All the long nights of winter
The white drifts heap and heap
To form a fleecy coverlet
Above the dreamer's sleep.

All the long morns of springtime
The tear-drops of the dew
Gleam in the violets' tender eyes
As if the blossoms knew.

Ah, who would break the rapture
Brooding and sweet and still,
The great peace of the sleeper
Upon the lonely hill!

THOMAS FLEMING DAY

1861–

292. *The Coasters*

OVERLOADED, undermanned,
Trusting to a lee,
Playing I-spy with the land,
Jockeying the sea —
That's the way the Coaster goes,
Through calm and hurricane:
Everywhere the tide flows,
Everywhere the wind blows,
From Mexico to Maine.

O East and West! O North and South!
We ply along the shore,
From famous Fundy's foggy mouth,
From floes of Labrador;
Through pass and strait, on sound and sea,
From port to port we stand —
The rocks of Race fade on our lee,
We hail the Rio Grande.
Our sails are never lost to sight;
On every gulf and bay
They gleam, in winter wind-cloud white,
In summer rain-cloud, gray.

We hold the coast with slippery grip;
We dare from cape to cape:
Our leaden fingers feel the dip
And trace the channel's shape.

We sail or bide as serves the tide;
Inshore we cheat its flow,
And side by side at anchor ride
When stormy head-winds blow.
We are the offspring of the shoal,
The hucksters of the sea;
From customs theft and pilot toll
Thank God that we are free.

Legging on and off the beach,
Drifting up the strait,
Fluking down the river reach,
Towing through the gate —
That's the way the Coaster goes,
Flirting with the gale:
Everywhere the tide flows,
Everywhere the wind blows,
From York to Beavertail.

Here and there to get a load,
Freighting anything;
Running off with spanker stowed,
Loafing wing-a-wing —
That's the way the Coaster goes,
Chumming with the land:
Everywhere the tide flows,
Everywhere the wind blows,
From Ray to Rio Grande.

We split the swell where rings the bell
On many a shallow's edge,
We take our flight past many a light
That guards the deadly ledge;

We greet Montauk across the foam,
We work the Vineyard Sound,
The Diamond sees us running home,
The Georges outward bound;
Absecom hears our canvas beat
When tacked off Brigantine;
We raise the Gulls with lifted sheet,
Pass wing-and-wing between.

Off Monomoy we fight the gale,
We drift off Sandy Key;
The watch of Fenwick sees our sail
Scud for Henlopen's lee.
With decks awash and canvas torn
We wallow up the Stream;
We drag dismasted, cargo borne,
And fright the ships of steam.
Death grips us with his frosty hands
In calm and hurricane;
We spill our bones on fifty sands
From Mexico to Maine.

Cargo reef in main and fore,
Manned by half a crew,
Romping up the weather shore,
Edging down the Blue —
That's the way the Coaster goes,
Scouting with the lead:
Everywhere the tide flows,
Everywhere the wind blows,
From Cruz to Quoddy Head.

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

1861–1920

293. *The Wild Ride*

I HEAR in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses;
All night, from their stalls, the importunate tramping and neighing.

Let cowards and laggards fall back! but alert to the saddle,
Straight, grim, and abreast, go the weather-worn, galloping legion,
With a stirrup-cup each to the lily of women that loves him.

The trail is through dolor and dread, over crags and morasses;
There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal or entice us:
What odds? We are knights, and our souls are but bent on the riding.

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses;
All night, from their stalls, the importunate tramping and neighing.

We spur to a land of no name, out-racing the storm-wind;
We leap to the infinite dark, like the sparks from the anvil.
Thou leadest, O God! All's well with Thy troopers that follow.

294. *Irish Peasant Song*

I TRY to knead and spin, but my life is low the while.
Oh, I long to be alone, and walk abroad a mile;
Yet if I walk alone, and think of naught at all,
Why from me that's young should the wild tears fall?

The shower-stricken earth, the earth-colored streams,
They breathe on me awake, and moan to me in dreams;
And yonder ivy fondling the broke castle-wall,
It pulls upon my heart till the wild tears fall.

The cabin-door looks down a furze-lighted hill,
And far as Leighlin Cross the fields are green and still;
But once I hear the blackbird in Leighlin hedges call,
The foolishness is on me, and the wild tears fall!

295. *Athassel Abbey*

FOLLY and Time have fashioned
Of thee a songless reed;
O not-of-earth-impassioned!
Thy music's mute indeed.

Red from the chantry crannies
The orchids burn and swing,
And where the arch began is
Rest for a raven's wing;

And up the bossy column
Quick tails of squirrels wave,
And black, prodigious, solemn,
A forest fills the nave.

Still faithfuller, still faster,
To ruin give thy heart:
Perfect before the Master
Aye as thou wert, thou art.

But I am wind that passes
In ignorant wild tears,
Uplifted from the grasses,
Blown to the void of years,

Blown to the void, yet sighing
In thee to merge and cease,
Last breath of beauty's dying,
Of sanctity, of peace!

Tho' use nor place forever
Unto my soul befall,
By no beloved river
Set in a saintly wall,

Do thou by builders given
Speech of the dumb to be,
Beneath thine open heaven,
Athassel, pray for me!

296. *Open, Time*

OPEN, Time, and let him pass
Shortly where his feet would be!
Like a leaf of Michaelmas
Swooning from the tree,

Ere its hour the manly mind
Trembles in a sure decrease,
Nor the body now can find
Any hold on peace.

Take him, weak and overworn;
Fold about his dying dream
Boyhood, and the April morn,
And the rolling stream:

Weather on a sunny ridge,
Showery weather, far from here;
Under some deep-ivied bridge,
Water rushing clear:

Water quick to cross and part,
(Golden light on silver sound),
Weather that was next his heart
All the world around!

Soon upon his vision break
These, in their remembered blue;
He shall toil no more, but wake
Young, in air he knew.

He has done with roofs and men.
Open, Time, and let him pass,
Vague and innocent again,
Into country grass.

297. *When on the Marge of Evening*

WHEN on the marge of evening the last blue light
is broken,
And winds of dreamy odor are loosened from afar,
Or when my lattice opens, before the lark has spoken,
On dim laburnum-blossoms, and morning's dying star,

I think of thee, (O mine the more if other eyes be
sleeping!)
Whose great and noonday splendor the many share and
see,
While sacred and forever, some perfect law is keeping
The late and early twilight alone and sweet for me.

298. *To a Dog's Memory*

THE gusty morns are here,
When all the reeds ride low with level spear;
And on such nights as lured us far of yore,
Down rocky alleys yet, and through the pine,
The Hound-star and the pagan Hunter shine;
But I and thou, ah, field-fellow of mine,
Together roam no more.

Soft showers go laden now
With odors of the sappy orchard-bough,
And brooks begin to brawl along the march;
The late frost steams from hollow sedges high;
The finch is come, the flame-blue dragon-fly,
The cowslip's common gold that children spy,
The plume upon the larch.

There is a music fills
The oaks of Belmont and the Wayland hills
Southward to Dewing's little bubbly stream,
The heavenly weather's call! O, who alive
Hastes not to start, delays not to arrive,
Having free feet that never felt a gyve
Weigh, even in a dream?

But thou, instead, hast found
The sunless April uplands underground,
And still, wherever thou art, I must be.
My beautiful! arise in might and mirth,
For we were tameless travellers from our birth;
Arise against thy narrow door of earth,
And keep the watch for me.

299. *Two Epitaphs*

I

TWO white heads the grasses cover;
Dorcas, and her lifelong lover.
While they graced their country closes
Simply as the brooks and roses,
Where was lot so poor, so trodden,
But they cheered it of 'a sudden?
Fifty years at home together,
Hand in hand, they went elsewhither,
Then first leaving hearts behind
Comfortless. Be thou as kind.

II

Praise thou the Mighty Mother for what is wrought,
not me,
A nameless nothing-caring head asleep against her knee.

300. *The Kings*

A MAN said unto his angel;
"My spirits are fallen through,
And I cannot carry this battle;
O brother, what shall I do?

"The terrible Kings are on me,
With spears that are deadly bright,
Against me so from the cradle
Do fate and my fathers fight."

Then said to the man his angel:
"Thou wavering, foolish soul,
Back to the ranks! What matter
To win or to lose the whole,

"As judged by the little judges
Who hearken not well, nor see?
Not thus by the other issue,
The Wise shall interpret thee.

"Thy will is the very, the only,
The solemn event of things;
The weakest of hearts defying
Is stronger than all these Kings.

"Though out of the past they gather,
Mind's Doubt and bodily Pain,
And pallid Thirst of the Spirit
That is kin to the other twain,

"And Grief, in a cloud of banners,
And ringletted Vain Desires,
And Vice, with the spoils upon him
Of thee and thy beaten sires,

"While Kings of eternal evil
Yet darken the hills about,
Thy part is with broken sabre
To rise on the last redoubt;

"To fear not sensible failure,
Nor covet the game at all,
But fighting, fighting, fighting,
Die, driven against the wall!"

FLORENCE EARLE COATES

1850–1927

301. *The World Is Mine*

FOR me the jasmine buds unfold
And silver daisies star the lea,
The crocus hoards the sunset gold,
And the wild rose breathes for me.
I feel the sap through the bough returning,
I share the skylark's transport fine,
I know the fountain's wayward yearning;
I love, and the world is mine!

I love, and thoughts that sometime grieved,
Still well remembered, grieve not me;
From all that darkened and deceived
Upsoars my spirit free.
For soft the hours repeat one story,
Sings the sea one strain divine,
My clouds arise all flushed with glory;
I love, and the world is mine!

302. *The Morning Glory*

WAS it worth while to paint so fair
Thy every leaf — to vein with faultless art
Each petal, taking the boon light and air
Of summer so to heart?

To bring thy beauty unto perfect flower,
Then, like a passing fragrance or a smile,
Vanish away, beyond recovery's power —
Was it, frail bloom, worth while?

Thy silence answers: "Life was mine!
And I, who pass without regret or grief,
Have cared the more to make my moment fine,
Because it was so brief.

"In its first radiance I have seen
The sun! — why tarry then till comes the night?
I go my way, content that I have been
Part of the morning light!"

EDITH MATILDA THOMAS

1854–1925

Isaiah xxxviii. 15

303. *The Quiet Pilgrim*

WHEN on my soul in nakedness
His swift, avertless hand did press,
Then I stood still, nor cried aloud,
Nor murmured low in ashes bowed;
And, since my woe is utterless,
To supreme quiet I am vowed;
Afar from me be moan and tears,—
I shall go softly all my years.

Whenso my quick, light-sandaled feet
Bring me where Joys and Pleasures meet,
I mingle with their throng at will;
They know me not an alien still,
Since neither words nor ways unsweet
Of storëd bitterness I spill;
Youth shuns me not, nor gladness fears,—
For I go softly all my years.

Whenso I come where Griefs convene,
And in my ear their voice is keen,
They know me not, as on I glide,
That with Arch Sorrow I abide.
They haggard are, and drooped of mien,
And round their brows have cypress tied:
Such shows I leave to light Grief's peers,—
I shall go softly all my years.

Yea, softly! heart of hearts unknown.
Silence hath speech that passeth moan,
More piercing-keen than breathëd cries
To such as heed, made sorrow-wise.
But save this voice without a tone,
That runs before me to the skies,
And rings above thy ringing spheres,
Lord, I go softly all my years!

304. *Lyric*

TELL me, is there sovereign cure
For heart-ache, heart-ache, —
Cordial quick and potion sure,
For heart-ache, heart-ache?

Fret thou not. If all else fail
For heart-ache, heart-ache,
One thing surely will avail, —
That's heart-break, heart-break!

305. *If Still They Live*

IF still they live, whom touch nor sight
Nor any subtlest sense can prove,
Though dwelling past our day and night,
At farthest star's remove, —

Oh, not because these skies they change
For upper deeps of sky unknown,
Shall that which made them ours grow strange,
For spirit holds its own;

Whether it pace this earth around,
Or cross, with printless, buoyant feet,
The unreverberant Profound
That hath no name nor mete!

306. *Rank and File*

YOU might have painted that picture,
I might have written that song:
Not ours, but another's, the triumph,
'Tis done and well done — so 'long!

You might have fought in the vanguard,
I might have struck at foul Wrong:
What matters whose hand was the foremost?
'Tis done and well done — so 'long!

So 'long, and into the darkness,
With the immemorial throng —
Foil to the few and the splendid:
All's done and well done — so 'long!

Yet, as we pass, we will pledge them —
The bold, and the bright, and the strong,
(Ours was never black envy:)
All's done and well done — so 'long!

GERTRUDE HALL

307. *How Shall We Tell an Angel* 1863–

HOW shall we tell an angel
From another guest?
How, from the common worldly herd,
One of the blest?

Hint of suppressëd halo,
Rustle of hidden wings,
Wafture of heavenly frankincense, —
Which of these things?

The old Sphinx smiles so subtly:
"I give no golden rule, —
Yet would I warn thee, World: treat well
Whom thou call'st fool."

308. *The Dust*

IT settles softly on your things,
Impalpable, fine, light, dull, gray:
Her dingy dust-clout Betty brings,
And singing brushes it away:

And it's a queen's robe, once so proud,
And it's the moths fed in its fold,
It's leaves, and roses, and the shroud
Wherein an ancient saint was rolled.

And it is Beauty's golden hair,
And it is Genius' crown of bay,
And it is lips once warm and fair
That kissed in some forgotten May. . . .

309. *My Old Counselor*

THE Sun looked from his everlasting skies,
He laughed into my daily-dying eyes;
He said to me, the brutal shining Sun:
"Poor, fretful, hot, rebellious, little one!

"Thou shalt not find it, yet there shall be truth;
Thou shalt grow old, but yet there shall be youth;
Thou shalt not do, yet great deeds shall be done, —
Believe me, child, I am an old, old Sun!

"Thou mayst go blind, yet fair will bloom the spring;
Thou mayst not hear them, but the birds will sing;
Thou mayst despair, no less will hope be rife;
Thou must lie dead, but many will have life.

"Thou mayst declare of love: it is a dream!
Yet long with love, my love, the Earth will teem:
Let not thy foolish heart be borne so low, —
Lift up thy heart! Exult that it is so!"

310. *How Dreary Looks the Ivied Cot*

HOW dreary looks the ivied cot,
(Yet all is flush with May!)
How sad the little garden plot,
Since Mary went away.

At morning to her window side
A flock of sparrows comes:
They wait and wonder, "Where can bide
That Mary of the crumbs?"

Below, the poor neglected flowers
In languid whispers sigh,
"Where's Mary of the grateful showers,
Will she come by and by?"

And every night down in the lane,
Just past the gate, there stands
A youth whose face, wet with his pain,
Is hidden in his hands.

311. *In the Art Museum*

HE stands where the white light showers,
In his wonted high recess;
The dust has woven a soft veil
Over his comeliness.

Beneath the pensive eyebrows
And lids that never beat,
The same glance floats forever —
So sad and solemn-sweet;

The same peace seals forever
The full lips finely curled, —
I'm come to this his dwelling
To bring him news of the world:

"Once more the spring hath mantled
With green the lasting hills —
Hast thou no faint remembrance
Of daisies and daffodils?

"Their stems still lengthen sunward
As when thou wast of us, —
My heart swells with its sorrow
For thee — Antinous."

312. *To a Weed*

YOU bold thing! thrusting 'neath the very nose
Of her fastidious majesty the rose,
Ev'n in the best ordainëd garden-bed,
Unauthorized, your smiling little head!

The gardener, — mind, — will come in his big boots
And drag you up by your rebellious roots,
And cast you forth to shrivel in the sun,
Your daring quelled, your little weed's life done.

And when the noon cools and the sun drops low,
He'll come again with his big wheelbarrow
And trundle you, — I don't know clearly where, —
But *off* — outside the dew, the light, the air.

Meantime — ah, yes! the air is very blue,
And gold the light and diamond the dew, —
You laugh and curtsey in your worthless way,
And you are gay — ah, so exceeding gay!

You argue in your manner of a weed,
You did not make yourself grow from a seed,
You fancy you've a claim to standing-room,
You dream yourself a right to breathe and bloom.

The Sun loves you, you think, just as the rose,
He never scorned you for a weed, — *he knows*,
The green-gold flies rest on you, and are glad,
It's only cross old gardeners find you bad.

You know, you weed, *I quite agree with you*,
I am a weed myself, and I laugh too, —
Both, just as long as we can shun his eye,
Let's sniff at the old gardener trudging by!

313. *A King's Daughter*

A FAIR King's daughter once possessed
A bird in whom she took delight;
And everything a bird loves best
She gave that favored one, but flight!

It was her joy to smooth his wings,
To watch those eyes that waxed and waned,
To tender him choice offerings
And have him feed from her white hand.

And every day she loved him more. . . .
But when at last she loved him most,
She opened wide his prison door,
Content that he to her were lost.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE

1856–

314. *Lydia*

BREAK forth, break forth, O Sudbury town,
And bid your yards be gay
Up all your gusty streets and down,
For Lydia comes to-day!

I hear it on the wharves below;
And if I buy or sell,
The good folk as they churchward go
Have only this to tell.

My mother, just for love of her,
Unlocks her carvëd drawers;
And sprigs of withered lavender
Drop down upon the floors.

For Lydia's bed must have the sheet
Spun out of linen sheer,
And Lydia's room be passing sweet
With odors of last year.

The violet flags are out once more
In lanes salt with the sea;
The thorn-bush at Saint Martin's door
Grows white for such as she.

So, Sudbury, bid your gardens blow,
For Lydia comes to-day;
Of all the words that I do know,
I have but this to say.

315. *Daffodils*

FATHERED by March, the daffodils are here.
First, all the air grew keen with yesterday,
And once a thrush from out some hollow gray
On a field's edge, where whitening stalks made cheer,
Fluted the last unto the budding year;
Now that the wind lets loose from orchard spray
Plum bloom and peach bloom down the dripping way,
Their punctual gold through the wet blades they rear.
Oh, fleet and sweet! A light to all that pass
Below, in the cramped yard, close to the street,
Long-stemmed ones flame behind the palings bare,
The whole of April in a tuft of grass.
Scarce here, soon will it be — oh, sweet and fleet! —
Gone like a snatch of song upon the stair.

316. *Tears*

WHEN I consider Life and its few years —
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street —
I wonder at the idleness of tears.

Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath what once he stayed to weep;
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

317. *Trust*

I AM Thy grass, O Lord!
I grow up sweet and tall
But for a day, beneath Thy sword
To lie at evenfall.

Yet have I not enough
In that brief day of mine?
The wind, the bees, the wholesome stuff
The sun pours out like wine.

Behold, this is my crown,—
Love will not let me be;
Love holds me here; Love cuts me down;
And it is well with me.

Lord, Love, keep it but so;
Thy purpose is full plain:
I die that after I may grow
As tall, as sweet again.

318. *A Holiday*

ALONG the pastoral ways I go,
To get the healing of the trees,
The ghostly news the hedges know;
To hive me honey like the bees,
Against the time of snow.

The common hawthorn that I see,
Beside the sunken wall astir,
Or any other blossoming tree,
Is each God's fair white gospeller,
His book upon the knee.

A gust-broken bough; a pilfered nest;
Rumors of orchard or of bin;
The thrifty things of east and west, —
The countryside becomes my Inn,
And I its happy guest.

319. *A Common Inference*

A NIGHT: mysterious, tender, quiet, deep;
Heavy with flowers; full of life asleep;
Thrilling with insect voices; thick with stars;
No cloud between the dewdrops and red Mars;
The small earth whirling softly on her way,
The moonbeams and the waterfalls at play;
A million million worlds that move in peace,
A million mighty laws that never cease;

And one small ant-heap, hidden by small weeds,
Rich with eggs, slaves, and store of millet seeds.
They sleep beneath the sod
And trust in God.

A day: all glorious, royal, blazing bright;
Heavy with flowers; full of life and light;
Great fields of corn and sunshine; courteous trees;
Snow-sainted mountains; earth-embracing seas;
Wide golden deserts; slender silver streams;
Clear rainbows where the tossing fountain gleams;
And everywhere, in happiness and peace,
A million forms of life that never cease;
And one small ant-heap, crushed by passing tread,
Hath scarce enough alive to mourn the dead!
They shriek beneath the sod,
"There is no God!"

320. *A Conservative*

THE garden beds I wandered by
One bright and cheerful morn,
When I found a new-fledged butterfly,
A-sitting on a thorn,
A black and crimson butterfly,
All doleful and forlorn.

I thought that life could have no sting
To infant butterflies,
So I gazed on this unhappy thing
With wonder and surprise,
While sadly with his waving wing
He wiped his weeping eyes.

Said I, "What can the matter be?
Why weepest thou so sore?
With garden fair and sunlight free
And flowers in goodly store:" —
But he only turned away from me
And burst into a roar.

Cried he, "My legs are thin and few
Where once I had a swarm!
Soft fuzzy fur — a joy to view —
Once kept my body warm,
Before these flapping wing-things grew,
To hamper and deform!"

At that outrageous bug I shot
The fury of mine eye;
Said I, in scorn all burning hot,
In rage and anger high,
"You ignominious idiot!
Those wings are made to fly!"

"I do not want to fly," said he,
"I only want to squirm!"
And he drooped his wings dejectedly,
But still his voice was firm:
"I do not want to be a fly!
I want to be a worm!"

O yesterday of unknown lack!
To-day of unknown bliss!
I left my fool in red and black,
The last I saw was this, —
The creature madly climbing back
Into his chrysalis.

321. *An Obstacle*

I WAS climbing up a mountain path
With many things to do,
Important business of my own,
And other people's too,
When I ran against a Prejudice
That quite cut off the view.

My work was such as could not wait,
My path quite clearly showed,
My strength and time were limited,
I carried quite a load;
And there that hulking Prejudice
Sat all across the road.

I spoke to him politely,
For he was huge and high,
And begged that he would move a bit
And let me travel by.
He smiled, but as for moving! —
He didn't even try.

And then I reasoned quietly
With that colossal mule:
My time was short — no other path —
The mountain winds were cool.
I argued like a Solomon;
He sat there like a fool.

Then I flew into a passion,
I danced and howled and swore.
I pelted and belabored him
Till I was stiff and sore;
He got as mad as I did —
But he sat there as before.

And then I begged him on my knees;
I might be kneeling still
If so I hoped to move that man
Of obdurate ill-will —
As well invite the monument
To vacate Bunker Hill.

So I sat before him helpless,
In an ecstasy of woe —
The mountain mists were rising fast,
The Sun was sinking slow —
When a sudden inspiration came,
As sudden winds do blow.

I took my hat, I took my stick,
My load I settled fair,
I approached that awful incubus
With an absent-minded air —
And I walked directly through him,
As if he wasn't there.

322. *Similar Cases*

THERE was once a little animal,
No bigger than a fox,
And on five toes he scampered
Over Tertiary rocks.
They called him Eohippus,
And they called him very small,
And they thought him of no value —
When they thought of him at all;
For the lumpish old Dinoceras
And Coryphodon so slow
Were the heavy aristocracy
In days of long ago.

Said the little Eohippus,
"I am going to be a horse!
And on my middle finger-nails
To run my earthly course!
I'm going to have a flowing tail!
I'm going to have a mane!
I'm going to stand fourteen hands high
On the psychozoic plain!"

The Coryphodon was horrified,
The Dinoceras was shocked;
And they chased young Eohippus,
But he skipped away and mocked.
Then they laughed enormous laughter,
And they groaned enormous groans,
And they bade young Eohippus
Go view his father's bones.

Said they, "You always were as small
And mean as now we see,
And that's conclusive evidence
That you're always going to be.
What! Be a great, tall, handsome beast,
With hoofs to gallop on?
Why! You'd have to change your nature!"
Said the Loxolophodon.

They considered him disposed of,
And retired with gait serene;
That was the way they argued
In "the early Eocene."

There was once an Anthropoidal Ape,
Far smarter than the rest,
And everything that they could do
He always did the best;
So they naturally disliked him,
And they gave him shoulders cool,
And when they mentioned him at all
They said he was a fool.

Cried this pretentious Ape one day,
"I'm going to be a Man!
And stand upright, and hunt, and fight,
And conquer all I can!
I'm going to cut down forest trees,
And make my houses higher!
I'm going to kill the Mastodon!
I'm going to make a fire!"

Loud screamed the Anthropoidal Apes
With laughter wild and gay;
They tried to catch the boastful one,
But he always got away.
So they yelled at him in chorus,
Which he minded not a whit;
And they pelted him with cocoanuts,
Which didn't seem to hit.

And when they gave him reasons
Which they thought of much avail,
To prove how his preposterous
Attempt was sure to fail.
Said the sages, "In the first place,
The thing cannot be done!
And, second, if it *could* be,
It would not be any fun!

And third and most conclusive,
And admitting no reply,
You would have to change your nature!
We should like to see you try!"
They chuckled then triumphantly,
These lean and hairy shapes,
For these things passed as arguments
With the Anthropoidal Apes.

There was once a Neolithic Man,
An enterprising wight,
Who made his chopping implements
Unusually bright.

Unusually clever he,
Unusually brave,
And he drew delightful Mammoths
On the borders of his cave.

To his Neolithic neighbors,
Who were startled and surprised,
Said he, "My friends, in course of time,
We shall be civilized!
"We are going to live in cities!
We are going to fight in wars!
We are going to eat three times a day
Without the natural cause!

We are going to turn life upside down
About a thing called gold!
We are going to want the earth, and take
As much as we can hold!
"We are going to wear great piles of stuff
Outside our proper skins!
We are going to have Diseases!
And Accomplishments!! And Sins!!!"

Then they all rose up in fury
Against their boastful friend,
For prehistoric patience
Cometh quickly to an end.
Said one, "This is chimerical!
Utopian! Absurd!"
Said another, "What a stupid life!
Too dull, upon my word!"

Cried all, "Before such things can come,
You idiotic child,
You must alter Human Nature!"
And they all sat back and smiled.
Thought they, "An answer to that last
It will be hard to find!"
It was a clinching argument
To the Neolithic Mind.

LILLA CABOT PERRY

323. *Meeting After Long Absence*

I

As she feared it would be

HERE in this room where first we met,
And where we said farewell with tears,
Here, where you swore "Though you forget,
My love shall deeper grow with years,"

Here, where the pictures on the wall,
The very rugs upon the floor,
The smallest objects you recall, —
I am awaiting you once more.

The books that we together read, —
From off their shelves they beckon me.
All here seems living! What is dead?
What is the ghost I fear to see?

Unchanged am I. Did you despise
My love as "small"? — it fills my heart!
You come — a stranger from your eyes
Looks out — and, meeting, first we part.

II

As it was

I told myself in singing words
That you were changed and I was true;
I would not trust winds, waves, and birds
That change was not in you.

I sang Love's dirge before we met, —
"As murdered corpse in river bed
In eyes my heart cannot forget
I see Love lying dead!"

You came — one look — no word was spoken,
Our hands, once clasped, forgot to part,
And, though our silence is unbroken,
Heart has found rest on heart.

CAROLINE DUER

324. *A Portrait*

A MAN more kindly, in his careless way,
Than many who profess a higher creed;
Whose fickle love might change from day to day,
And yet be faithful to a friend in need;
Whose manners covered, through life's outs and ins,
Like charity, a multitude of sins.

A man of honor, too, as such things go;
Discreet and secret — qualities of use —
Selfish, but not self-conscious, generous, slow
To anger, but most ready in excuse.
His wit and cleverness consisted not
So much in what he said as what he got.

His principles one might not quite commend,
And they were much too simple to mistake:
Never to turn his back upon a friend,
Never to lie, but for a woman's sake,
To take the sweets that came within his way,
And pay the price if there were price to pay.

Idle, good-looking, negatively wise,
Lazy in action, plausible in speech;
Favor he found in many women's eyes,
And valued most that which was hard to reach.
Few are both true and tender, and he grew,
In time, a little tenderer than true.

Knowing much evil, half-regretting good,
As we regret a childish impulse — lost,
Wearied with knowledge best not understood,
Bored with the disenchantment that it cost;
But, in conclusion, with no failings hid:
A gentleman, no matter what he did.

GRACE DENIO LITCHFIELD

1849–

325. *To a Hurt Child*

WHAT, are you hurt, Sweet? So am I;
Cut to the heart;
Though I may neither moan nor cry,
To ease the smart.

Where was it, Love? Just here! So wide
Upon your cheek!
Oh happy pain that needs no pride,
And may dare speak.

Lay here your pretty head. One touch
Will heal its worst,
While I, whose wound bleeds overmuch,
Go all unnursed.

There, Sweet. Run back now to your play,
Forget your woes.
I too was sorely hurt this day, —
But no one knows.

MARY McNEIL FENOLLOSA

326. *Flying Fish*

OUT where the sky and the sky-blue sea
Merge in a mist of sheen,
There started a vision of silver things,
A leap and a quiver, a flash of wings
The sky and the sea between.

Is it of birds from the blue above,
Or fish from the depths that be?
Or is it the ghosts
In silver hosts
Of birds that were drowned at sea?

LANGDON ELWYN MITCHELL

1862–

327. *To One Being Old*

HER aged hands are worn with works of love;
Dear aged hands that oft on me are laid;
Her heart's below, but, oh, her love's above,
As flowers do sunward turn though in the shade.

The set of sun is dear that lasts not long,
And she is sweeter far than light that dies:
But if her aged body's weak, she's strong;
Her folly, wisdom in a softer guise.

The very smile of love is hers, and she
Hath him long known where others knew a shade;
Forget thine eyes, and learn herewith to see
Within this time-worn sheath the snowy blade.

Upon her lovely cheek there still doth play
A maiden's blush, for her heart grows not old;
Her silver locks go sweetly all astray;
Though silver are her locks, her heart is gold!

328. *The Wayside Virgin*

France

I AM the Virgin; from this granite ledge
A hundred weary winters have I watched
The lonely road that wanders at my feet;
And many days I've sat here, in my lap
A little heap of snow, and overheard
The dry, dead voices of sere, rustling leaves;
While scarce a beggar creaked across the way.
How very old I am! I have forgot
The day they fixed me here; and whence I came,
With crown of gold, and all my tarnished blue.

How green the grass is now, and all around
Blossoms the May; but it is cold in here,
Sunless and cold. — Now comes a little maid
To kneel among the asters at my feet;
What a sweet noise she makes, like murmurings
Of bees in June! I wonder what they say,
These rosy mortals, when they look at me?
I wonder why
They call me Mary and bow down to me?
Oh, I am weary of my painted box, —
Come, child,
And lay thy warm face on my wooden cheek,
That I may feel it glow as once of yore
It glowed when I, a cedar's happy heart,
Felt the first sunshine of the early spring!

329. *Written At the End of a Book*

THIS is the end of the book
  Written by God.
I am the earth he took,
  I am the sod,
The wood and iron which he struck
  With his sounding rod.

I am the reed that he blew:
  Once quietly
By the riverside I grew,
  Till one day he
Rooted me up and breathed a new
  Delirium in me.

Would he had left me there,
  Where all is still;
To lean on the heavy air,
  Silent, at will
To be, and joy, yet not to share,
  The avenging thrill.

I am the reed that he blew,
  Which yet he blows,
(For this is his breath too,
  And these, like those,
Are his own words blown unto you,
  — Hearken if you choose!)

This is the end of the book;
And, if you read
Ought that is evil, why, look,
I but obeyed,
— When deep his voice in my ear shook,
I blew as he said!

GEORGE SANTAYANA

1863-

330. *On the Death of a Metaphysician*

UNHAPPY dreamer, who outwinged in flight
The pleasant region of the things I love,
And soared beyond the sunshine, and above
The golden cornfields and the dear and bright
Warmth of the hearth, — blasphemer of delight,
Was your proud bosom not at peace with Jove,
That you sought, thankless for his guarded grove,
The empty horror of abysmal night?
Ah, the thin air is cold above the moon!
I stood and saw you fall, befooled in death,
As, in your numbëd spirit's fatal swoon,
You cried you were a god, or were to be;
I heard with feeble moan your boastful breath
Bubble from depths of the Icarian sea.

331. *On a Piece of Tapestry*

HOLD high the woof, dear friends, that we may see
The cunning mixture of its colors rare.
Nothing in nature purposely is fair, —
Her mingled beauties never quite agree;

But here all vivid dyes that garish be,
To that tint mellowed which the sense will bear,
Glow, and not wound the eye that, resting there,
Lingers to feed its gentle ecstasy.
Crimson and purple and all hues of wine,
Saffron and russet, brown and sober green
Are rich the shadowy depths of blue between;
While silver threads with golden intertwine,
To catch the glimmer of a fickle sheen, —
All the long labor of some captive queen.

332. *Faith*

O WORLD, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.

333. *These Strewn Thoughts by the Mountain Pathway Sprung*

THESE strewn thoughts, by the mountain pathway sprung,
I conned for comfort, till I ceased to grieve,
And with these flowering thorns I dare to weave
The crown, great Mother, on thine altar hung.
Teach thou a larger speech to my loosed tongue,
And to mine opened eyes thy secrets give,
That in thy perfect love I learn to live,
And in thine immortality be young.
The soul is not on earth an alien thing
That hath her life's rich sources otherwhere;
She is a parcel of the sacred air.
She takes her being from the breath of spring,
The glance of Phoebus is her fount of light,
And her long sleep a draught of primal night.

334. *We Needs Must be Divided in the Tomb*

WE needs must be divided in the tomb,
For I would die among the hills of Spain,
And o'er the treeless melancholy plain
Await the coming of the final gloom.
But thou — O pitiful! — wilt find scant room
Among thy kindred by the northern main,
And fade into the drifting mist again,
The hemlocks' shadow, or the pines' perfume.

Let gallants lie beside their ladies' dust
In one cold grave, with mortal love inurned;
Let the sea part our ashes, if it must,
The souls fled thence which love immortal burned,
For they were wedded without bond of lust,
And nothing of our heart to earth returned.

335. *To W. P.*

I

CALM was the sea to which your course you kept,
Oh, how much calmer than all southern seas!
Many your nameless mates, whom the keen breeze
Wafted from mothers that of old have wept.
All souls of children taken as they slept
Are your companies, partners of your ease,
And the green souls of all these autumn trees
Are with you through the silent spaces swept.
Your virgin body gave its gentle breath
Untainted to the gods. Why should we grieve,
But that we merit not your holy death?
We shall not loiter long, your friends and I;
Living you made it goodlier to live,
Dead you will make it easier to die.

II

With you a part of me hath passed away;
For in the peopled forest of my mind
A tree made leafless by this wintry wind
Shall never don again its green array.

Chapel and fireside, country road and bay,
Have something of their friendliness resigned;
Another, if I would, I could not find,
And I am grown much older in a day.
But yet I treasure in my memory
Your gift of charity, your mellow ease,
And the dear honor of your amity;
To these once mine, my life is rich with these.
And I scarce know which part may greater be, —
What I keep of you, or you rob from me.

III

Your bark lies anchored in the peaceful bight
Until a kinder wind unfurl her sail;
Your docile spirit, wingëd by this gale,
Hath at the dawning fled into the light.
And I half know why heaven deemed it right
Your youth, and this my joy in youth, should fail;
God hath them still, for ever they avail,
Eternity hath borrowed that delight.
For long ago I taught my thoughts to run
Where all the great things live that lived of yore,
And in eternal quiet float and soar;
There all my loves are gathered into one,
Where change is not, nor parting any more,
Nor evolution of the moon and sun.

IV

In my deep heart these chimes would still have rung
To toll your passing, had you not been dead;
For time a sadder mask than death may spread
Over the face that ever should be young.

The bough that falls with all its trophies hung
Falls not too soon, but lays its flower-crowned head
Most royal in the dust, with no leaf shed
Unhallowed or unchiselled or unsung —
And though the after world may never hear
The happy name of one so gently true,
Nor chronicles write large this fatal year,
Yet we who loved you, though we be but few,
Keep you in whatsoe'er is good, and dear
In our weak virtues monuments of you.

RICHARD HOVEY

1864–1900

336. *Song*

(*From "The Marriage of Guenevere"*)

THE flower-born Blodueda,
Great joy of love was hers;
Now lonely is the life she leads
Among the moonlit firs.

The white enchantress, Arianrod,
The daughter of King Don,
Hath hidden in a secret place
And borne a goodly son.

But he shall have nor name nor arms
Wherewith to get him fame,
Unless his mother's heart relent
And give him arms and name.

Twice hath she cursed him from her heart —
Twice and yet once again,
That he shall never take a wife
Of all the seed of men.

Yet all unwitting she gave him arms,
When the foe was in the land;
And all unwitting a goodly name,
Llew of the Steady Hand.

And Gwydion, the son of Don,
Hath wrought with mighty charms
A mystery of maidenhood
To lie within his arms.

He took the blossoms of the oak
And the blossoms of the broom
And the blossoms of the meadow-sweet
And fashioned her therefrom.

Of all the maidens on the earth
She was by far most fair,
And the memory of the meadow-sweet
Was odors in her hair.

But she hath given her heart away
To the stout lord of Penllyn,
And he is slain by Cynvall's banks,
Betrayed by all his kin.

And oh, and she were light of heart
Had they but slain her so!
In likeness of a mournful owl,
She grieves her nightly woe.

The motherless Blodueda
Shall never find release;
From eve till morn she makes her moan
Among the moonlit trees.

337. *The Wander-Lovers*

DOWN the world with Marna!
That's the life for me!
Wandering with the wandering wind,
Vagabond and unconfined!
Roving with the roving rain
Its unboundaried domain!
Kith and kin of wander-kind,
Children of the sea!

Petrels of the sea-drift!
Swallows of the lea!
Arabs of the whole wide girth
Of the wind-encircled earth!
In all climes we pitch our tents,
Cronies of the elements,
With the secret lords of birth
Intimate and free.

All the seaboard knows us
From Fundy to the Keys;
Every bend and every creek
Of abundant Chesapeake;

Ardise hills and Newport coves
And the far-off orange groves,
Where Floridian oceans break,
Tropic tiger seas.

Down the world with Marna,
Tarrying there and here!
Just as much at home in Spain
As in Tangier or Touraine!
Shakespeare's Avon knows us well,
And the crags of Neufchâtel;
And the ancient Nile is fain
Of our coming near.

Down the world with Marna,
Daughter of the air!
Marna of the subtle grace,
And the vision in her face!
Moving in the measures trod
By the angels before God!
With her sky-blue eyes amaze
And her sea-blue hair!

Marna with the trees' life
In her veins a-stir!
Marna of the aspen heart
Where the sudden quivers start!
Quick-responsive, subtle, wild!
Artless as an artless child,
Spite of all her reach of art!
Oh, to roam with her!

Marna with the wind's will,
Daughter of the sea!
Marna of the quick disdain,
Starting at the dream of stain!
At a smile with love aglow,
At a frown a statued woe,
Standing pinnacled in pain
Till a kiss sets free!

Down the world with Marna,
Daughter of the fire!
Marna of the deathless hope,
Still alert to win new scope
Where the wings of life may spread
For a flight unhazarded!
Dreaming of the speech to cope
With the heart's desire!

Marna of the far quest
After the divine!
Striving ever for some goal
Past the blunder-god's control!
Dreaming of potential years
When no day shall dawn in fears!
That's the Marna of my soul,
Wander-bride of mine!

338. *The Sea Gypsy*

I AM fevered with the sunset,
I am fretful with the bay,
For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing,
With her topsails shot with fire,
And my heart has gone aboard her
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again to-morrow!
With the sunset I must be
Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the sea.

339. *Unmanifest Destiny*

TO what new fates, my country, far
And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star,
Compelled to what unchosen end,

Across the sea that knows no beach
The Admiral of Nations guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
Who knew that God was in the flame?

Had not defeat upon defeat,
Disaster on disaster come,
The slave's emancipated feet
Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
To mightier issues that we planned,
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
My country, serves Its dark command.

I do not know beneath what sky
Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
I only know it shall be great.

340. *From "Taliesin"*

Voices of Unseen Spirits

HERE falls no light of sun nor stars;
No stir nor striving here intrudes;
No moan nor merry-making mars
The quiet of these solitudes.

Submerged in sleep, the passive soul
Is one with all the things that seem
Night blurs in one confusëd whole
Alike the dreamer and the dream.

O dwellers in the busy town!
  For dreams you smile, for dreams you weep.
Come out, and lay your burdens down!
  Come out; there is no God but Sleep.

Sleep, and renounce the vital day;
  For evil is the child of life.
Let be the will to live, and pray
  To find forgetfulness of strife.

Beneath the thicket of these leaves
  No light discriminates each from each.
No Self that wrongs, no Self that grieves,
  Hath longer deed nor creed nor speech.

Sleep on the mighty Mother's breast!
  Sleep, and no more be separate!
Then, one with Nature's ageless rest,
  There shall be no more sin to hate.

Taliesin

Spirits of Sleep,
  That swell and sink
    In the sea of Being
Like waves on the deep,
Forming, crumbling,
Fumbling, and tumbling
    Forever, unseeing,
  From brink to brink!

Perishing voices,
  That call and call
    From the coves of dream
With hollow noises!

I hear the sweep
Of the tides of sleep,
The ocean stream
Where the ages fall.

But not for these
Will I let me die,
Though my heart remembers
The calling seas;
For the cycles fought
Till form was wrought
And Might had members
And I was I.

Yet still to you,
O Dreams, I turn;
Not with a prayer
But a bidding to do!
I surmount and subdue you;
Not without you but through you
I shall forge and fare
To the chosen bourne.

Voices

We are ware of a will
Cries "Peace, be still!"
And our waters cease
To a troubled peace.

Taliesin

Lo, star upon star!
They dwell alone
Sirius, Altair,
Algebar!
Their ways are asunder, —
Aloof, in thunder
They march and flare
From zone to zone.

But the formless ether
Far and far
Enfolds their places.
Therein together
At one they sweep
From deep to deep,
And over its spaces
Star calls to star.

Through its waves they reach
Beyond their spheres
To their fellow fires.
Each yearns to each,
And the straight wills swerve
To a yielding curve,
And a moth's desires
Deflect the years.

And with urge on urge
Of the rippling wave
Light speeds through space;
The domes emerge;

And the halls of Night
Behold each light
    Reveal his face
  To the vast conclave.

The centred Soul
  By these is known.
    Its will it wreaks
As its own control;
But dumb, unseeing,
The sea of Being
    Washes the peaks
  Where it strives alone.

Voices

As the dawn awaits
The recoiling gates
Of the eastern air,
We are calm and hear.

341. *Envoy*

To "More Songs from Vagabondia"

I

WHOSE furthest footsteps never strayed
    Beyond the village of his birth
Is but a lodger for the night
In this old wayside inn of earth.

To-morrow he shall take his pack,
And set out for the ways beyond
On the old trail from star to star,
An alien and a vagabond.

II

If any record of our names
Be blown about the hills of time,
Let no one sunder us in death, —
The man of paint, the men of rhyme.

Of all our good, of all our bad,
This one thing only is of worth, —
We held the league of heart to heart
The only purpose of the earth.

MADISON CAWEIN

1865–1914

342. *To a Wind-Flower*

TEACH me the secret of thy loveliness,
That, being made wise, I may aspire to be
As beautiful in thought, and so express
Immortal truths to earth's mortality;
Though to my soul ability be less
Than 'tis to thee, O sweet anemone.

Teach me the secret of thy innocence,
That in simplicity I may grow wise,
Asking from Art no other recompense
Than the approval of her own just eyes;
So may I rise to some fair eminence,
Though less than thine, O cousin of the skies.

Teach me these things, through whose high knowledge,
I, —
When Death hath poured oblivion through my veins,
And brought me home, as all are brought, to lie
In that vast house, common to serfs and Thanes, —
I shall not die, I shall not utterly die,
For beauty born of beauty — *that* remains.

343. *Comradery*

WITH eyes hand-arched he looks into
The morning's face, then turns away
With schoolboy feet, all wet with dew,
Out for a holiday.

The hill brook sings, incessant stars,
Foam-fashioned, on its restless breast;
And where he wades its water-bars
Its song is happiest.

A comrade of the chinquapin,
He looks into its knotted eyes
And sees its heart; and, deep within,
Its soul that makes him wise.

The wood-thrush knows and follows him,
Who whistles up the birds and bees;
And round him all the perfumes swim
Of woodland loam and trees.

Where'er he pass, the supple springs'
Foam-people sing the flowers awake;
And sappy lips of bark-clad things
Laugh ripe each fruited brake.

His touch is a companionship;
His word, an old authority:
He comes, a lyric at his lip,
Unstudied Poesy.

344.

Dirge

WHAT shall her silence keep
Under the sun?
Here, where the willows weep
And waters run;
Here, where she lies asleep,
And all is done.

Lights, when the tree-top swings;
Scents that are sown;
Sounds of the wood-bird's wings;
And the bee's drone:
These be her comfortings
Under the stone.

What shall watch o'er her here
When day is fled?
Here, when the night is near
And skies are red;
Here, where she lieth dear
And young and dead.

Shadows, and winds that spill
Dew, and the tune
Of the wild whippoorwill,
And the white moon, —
These be the watchers still
Over her stone.

PHILIP HENRY SAVAGE

1858–1899

345. *Silkweed*

LIGHTER than dandelion down,
Or feathers from the white moth's wing,
Out of the gates of bramble-town
The silkweed goes a-gypsying.

Too fair to fly in autumn's rout,
All winter in the sheath it lay;
But now, when spring is pushing out,
The zephyr calls, "Away! away!"

Through mullein, bramble, brake, and fern,
Up from their cradle-spring they fly,
Beyond the boundary wall to turn
And voyage through the friendly sky.

Softly, as if instinct with thought,
They float and drift, delay and turn;
And one avoids and one is caught
Between an oak-leaf and a fern.

And one holds by an airy line
The spider drew from tree to tree;
And if the web is light and fine,
'Tis not so light and fine as he!

And one goes questing up the wall
As if to find a door; and then,
As if he did not care at all,
Goes over, and adown the glen.

And all in airiest fashion fare
Adventuring, as if, indeed,
'Twere not so grave a thing to bear
The burden of a seed!

346. *New England*

WHOE'ER thou art, who walkest there
Where God first taught my feet to roam,
Breathe but my name into the air,
I am content, for that is home.

A sense, a color comes to me,
Of baybushes that heavy lie
With juniper along the sea,
And the blue sea along the sky.

New England is my home; 'tis there
I love the pagan Sun and Moon.
'Tis there I love the growing year,
December and young-summer June.

PHILIP HENRY SAVAGE

I'd rather love one blade of grass
That grows on one New England hill,
Than drain the whole world in the glass
Of fortune, when the heart is still.

ARTHUR COLTON

1868–

347. *To Faustine*

SOMETIME, it may be, you and I
In some deserted yard will lie
Where Memory fades away;
Caring no more for Love his dreams,
Busy with new and alien themes,
The saints and sages say.

But let our graves be side by side,
So idlers may at evening tide
Pause there a moment's space:
"Ah, they were lovers who lie here;
Else why these low graves laid so near,
In this forgotten place?"

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

1869–1910

348. *Gloucester Moors*

A MILE behind is Gloucester town
Where the fishing fleets put in,
A mile ahead the land dips down
And the woods and farms begin.

Here, where the moors stretch free
In the high blue afternoon,
Are the marching sun and talking sea,
And the racing winds that wheel and flee
On the flying heels of June.

Jill-o'er-the-ground is purple blue,
Blue is the quaker maid,
The wild geranium holds its dew
Long in the boulder's shade.
Wax-red hangs the cup
From the huckleberry boughs,
In barberry bells the gray moths sup,
Or where the choke-cherry lifts high up
Sweet bowls for their carouse.

Over the shelf of the sandy cove
Beach-peas blossom late.
By copse and cliff the swallows rove
Each calling to his mate.
Seaward the sea-gulls go,
And the land-birds all are here;
That green-gold flash was a vireo,
And yonder flame where the marsh-flags grow
Was a scarlet tanager.

This earth is not the steadfast place
We landsmen build upon;
From deep to deep she varies pace,
And while she comes is gone.

Beneath my feet I feel
Her smooth bulk heave and dip;
With velvet plunge and soft upreel
She swings and steadies to her keel
Like a gallant, gallant ship.

These summer clouds she sets for sail,
The sun is her masthead light,
She tows the moon like a pinnace frail
Where her phosphor wake churns bright.
Now hid, now looming clear,
On the face of the dangerous blue
The star fleets tack and wheel and veer,
But on, but on does the old earth steer
As if her port she knew.

God, dear God! Does she know her port,
Though she goes so far about?
Or blind astray, does she make her sport
To brazen and chance it out?
I watched when her captains passed:
She were better captainless.
Men in the cabin, before the mast,
But some were reckless and some aghast.
And some sat gorged at mess.

By her battened hatch I leaned and caught
Sounds from the noisome hold, —
Cursing and sighing of souls distraught
And cries too sad to be told.

Then I strove to go down and see;
But they said, "Thou are not of us!"
I turned to those on deck with me
And cried, "Give help!" But they said, "Let be:
Our ship sails faster thus."

Jill-o'er-the-ground is purple blue,
Blue is the quaker-maid,
The alder-clump where the brook comes through
Breeds cresses in its shade.
To be out of the moiling street
With its swelter and its sin!
Who has given to me this sweet,
And given my brother dust to eat?
And when will his wage come in?

Scattering wide or blown in ranks,
Yellow and white and brown,
Boats and boats from the fishing banks
Come home to Gloucester town.
There is cash to purse and spend,
There are wives to be embraced,
Hearts to borrow and hearts to lend,
And hearts to take and keep to the end,—
O little sails, make haste!

But thou, vast outbound ship of souls,
What harbor town for thee?
What shapes, when thy arriving tolls,
Shall crowd the banks to see?

Shall all the happy shipmates then
Stand singing brotherly?
Or shall a haggard ruthless few
Warp her over and bring her to,
While the many broken souls of men
Fester down in the slaver's pen,
And nothing to say or do?

349. *A Grey Day*

GREY drizzling mists the moorlands drape,
Rain whitens the dead sea,
From headland dim to sullen cape
Grey sails creep wearily.
I know not how that merchantman
Has found the heart; but 'tis her plan
Seaward her endless course to shape.

Unreal as insects that appall
A drunkard's peevish brain,
O'er the grey deep the dories crawl,
Four-legged, with rower's twain:
Midgets and minims of the earth,
Across old ocean's vasty girth
Toiling — heroic, comical!

I wonder how that merchant's crew
Have ever found the will!
I wonder what the fishers do
To keep them toiling still!
I wonder how the heart of man
Has patience to live out its span,
Or wait until its dreams come true.

350. *Faded Pictures*

ONLY two patient eyes to stare
Out of the canvas. All the rest —
The warm green gown, the small hands pressed
Tight in the lap, the braided hair,

That must have made the sweet low brow
So earnest, centuries ago,
When someone saw it change and glow —
All faded! Just the eyes burn now.

I dare say people pass and pass
Before the blistered little frame,
And dingy work without a name
Stuck in behind its square of glass.

But I, well, I left Rafael
Just to come drink these eyes of hers,
To think away the stains and blurs
And make all new again and well.

Only, for tears my head will bow,
Because there on my heart's last wall,
Scarce one tint left to tell it all,
A picture keeps its eyes somehow.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

1872–1906

351. *A Corn-Song*

ON the wide veranda white,
In the purple failing light,
Sits the master while the sun is lowly burning;
And his dreamy thoughts are drowned
In the softly flowing sound
Of the corn-songs of the field-hands slow returning.

Oh, we hoe de co'n
Since de ehly mo'n;
Now de sinkin' sun
Says de day is done.

O'er the fields with heavy tread,
Light of heart and high of head,
Though the halting steps be labored, slow, and weary;
Still the spirits brave and strong
Find a comforter in song,
And their corn-song rises ever loud and cheery.

Oh, we hoe de co'n
Since de ehly mo'n;
Now de sinkin' sun
Says de day is done.

To the master in his seat,
Comes the burden, full and sweet,
Of the mellow minor music growing clearer,
As the toilers raise the hymn,
Thro' the silence dusk and dim,
To the cabin's restful shelter drawing nearer.

Oh, we hoe de co'n
Since de ehly mo'n;
Now de sinkin' sun
Says de day is done.

And a tear is in the eye
Of the master sitting by,
As he listens to the echoes low-replying,
To the music's fading calls,
As it faints away and falls
Into silence, deep within the cabin dying.

Oh, we hoe de co'n
Since de ehly mo'n;
Now de sinkin' sun
Says de day is done.

EUGENE RICHARD WHITE

1872–

352. *Of the Lost Ship*

WHAT has become of the good ship Kite?
Where is her hull of chosen oak?
Who were the Victors, what the Fight?
The old Wives — whom did they invoke,
That should tell them so uncannily:

"*Fell through a crack in the Floor of the Sea*"?

"Trafficked with death in a cruise foredone,"
The Preachers drone to the Salem Folk,

When the Sea has swallowed up the Sun
  And the white gulls glint — was it they who spoke?
Wes'-Sou' West from the Devil's Quay:

"*Fell through a crack in the Floor of the Sea*"?

Of the old-time Band there's not a man
  Who has ever told how the ship went down.
Were they marked by God with the fearsome ban?
  Butchered they priests in a sun-white town?
Do they harry Hell where they may be:

"*Fell through a crack in the Floor of the Sea*"?

Though ye searched the West to the guttering sun,
  Or the East till the baffled lights burn black,
Or North to the bergs till the South be won,
  The changeling shadows answer back,
And their trembling lips pale piteously:

"*Fell through a crack in the Floor of the Sea*"?

And when the great grim Finger becks
  The whining Seas from their ancient bed,
Shall some tongue speak from the world-old wrecks
  To read the log of the Thwarted Dead?
Is there never an end on the mystery:

"*Fell through a crack in the Floor of the Sea*"?

ELAINE GOODALE EASTMAN

1863-

353. *A Countrywoman of Mine*

HANDSOME? I hardly know. Her profile's fine —
Delightful, intellectual, aquiline.

Her keen eyes light it; keen, yet often kind;
Her fair hair crowns it to an artist's mind.

Fine figure and fine manners, without doubt,
Determine half her charm, and bear me out.

Learned? Well, rather. See them for yourself —
Mill, Spencer, Darwin, on her favorite shelf.

Well educated, certainly well read;
Well born, of course, and (not of course) well bred.

Provincial? Never! Cockney? Not at all.
Her world is small enough, yet not too small.

To prove she knows it, only watch a while
That humorous, tender, half-sarcastic smile.

Accomplished? She says not; but who can tell?
She does some simple things, and does them well.

She walks well, stands well, sits well — things so rare,
To praise as they deserve I hardly dare!

She rows, rides, dances — admirably done!
Delights in each, and yet depends on none.

What to take up she knows, and what to drop;
How to say clever things, and when to stop.

Few dress so well; she does what few can do,
Forgets what she has on; and so do you?

She's not too careless, not conventional quite;
Does what she likes; knows what she does is right.

Takes New World freedom and with Old World ease
She's but to please herself the world to please.

354. *Ashes of Roses*

SOFT on the sunset sky
Bright daylight closes,
Leaving, when light doth die,
Pale hues that mingling lie, —
Ashes of roses.

When love's warm sun is set,
Love's brightness closes;
Eyes with hot tears are wet,
In hearts there linger yet
Ashes of roses.

SARA KING WILEY

355. *The Faun*

I SAW a faun!
An eerie faun, that danced along the woodland path,
All in the feathery freshness of the year,
An hour after dawn.
The sunbeams yet were pale and weak;
One lay, a shimmering silver streak,
Across the mossy path.
He wore a skin of dapple deer
About him flung,
And rosy-stemmed grape vine,
To twist and twine,
By glossy leaves and tiny tendrils clung.
I've heard their ears are pointed fur,
Like the spring chestnut's silky bur;
I could not see what ears he had,
Because of all his bronze-brown hair
About his long neck rippling down
Even to his shoulders bare.
His eyes were green and very bright,
Quick as a bird's apoise for flight;
His skin was softly brown.

Alert and graceful did he stray,
Swaying as lithe young birches sway —
He looked scarce humaner than they.
His lips were full, but wistful sad,
Curved with shy scorn,
And like his eyes they seemed to mourn

Some beauty lost or happiness.
But once a low branch brushed a tress
Of cool wet leaves across his brow,
And then a sudden laugh outrang,
As if a hundred thrushes sang —
O, I can hear it now!
The sad mouth slanted elfishly,
And all the pointed teeth, nut-white,
Gleamed merrily,
The wild eyes shutting tight
In wrinkles of delight.
I laughed out rude, and off ran he!

Some say they have no souls at all, these fauns,
But hark!
I'll tell you what I've never told before —
I know 'tis true: (You need not wink and nod!)
He's half a god!
Once in mid-June, and just before the dark,
I watched for him.
The woods were hot and still and full of scent,
Green in the twilight dim;
The sunset pink flushed the white heaven's floor
With fiery flakes besprent.
I heard him down where rill and river meet,
Fluting upon his pipe —
O, sweet, sweet, clear and sweet,
Clearer than quail when grain is ripe,
A flowing note that seemed the very breath
That the soft summer saith
Low to herself when evening rises slow
From dell and hollow to the shining sky.

O, pure and smooth in mystic loveliness,
A singing wanderer that soared to press
Into the holy secret of the woods,
Peace of the woods,
That over all, immeasurable, broods.
Lapsing in subtle change, the melody
Slipped into breaks forlorn,
And sobbed as if he fell to think on death,
To mourn and mourn
That all things fair shall fade away and die;
And every strain
Thrilled out to cry and sigh,
Pain and complain,
So sad, so bitter sad —
Surely a human heart the creature had!
Then brave and beautiful the rippling ran
Like brooks that fall in foam,
Exulting streams whose source no man can scan,
That laugh and laugh, and roam
Forever in the woods, forever free,
Whose tiny throats still prophesy the sea.
So marvellous sweet, I wept in joy and fear,
Nor dared to draw anear.
I went next day and wandered through the place:
I found no faun, but one blurred hoof-print's trace,
And one more certain token —
The slender plumy reeds were hacked and broken.

I thought to see him soon
But watched through long, long months before he came,
Until September's floss and flame
Across the hills blew glimmering,
And lily-white the harvest moon

Spilt silver frost-light in the wood.
Once, as I stood
Dipping up water from the spring,
I saw through lucid drops that fell,
Scarring my red cheeks in the well,
A wavering form with shoulders hunched,
Legs all too long and head down-bunched,
That leaped and pranced,
And with its long black shade before it danced.
Hope rose within my heart — a golden dawn!
Panting, I ran to see: it was my faun!
He trod as high as if his agile feet,
Like the deer fleet,
Had hoofs instead of toes,
And as a leaf falls fell his steps so light,
Unechoing as rain;
The shadow wriggling as a black stream flows.
But O, I followed crazy with delight,
Heavily pattering loud.
He sprang aloft, and bowed
Until his hair, bronze even in the pallid light,
Dropped in his eyes like a bright mane,
And then off darted he again!

I cannot love my old playfellows now,
The plodding rustics kind and good —
I have forgotten how.
They smell of musty hay, not the fresh wood;
They bring me ruddy apples or a pear,
Or ribbons from the fair,
That every silly bumpkin gives his lass.
I hate their clumsy feet and round blue eyes,

I hate their lumpish fruits and fopperies;
I'd rather have fresh dewberries strung on grass.
I wonder if my faun would think me fair?
I'm plump and short and strong, with silk-smooth hair
Abundant, waveless brown;
My skin is amber as a peach; my lips and cheeks are
poppy-red.
I'm not a fragile lily or pale rose,
But like the gypsy tulip whose gold head
With scarlet dash in each full petal glows.
For me these country folk are slow and dull;
O, but my faun was beautiful!

Some day when spring is here in showers,
And wimpling rain blows on light flowers,
And all the new pale green is budding sweet,
I'll find again the print of dancing feet;
His pointed toes will mark the ground,
Though the moist mosses give no sound.
But I shall follow on his track
Into the warm, wet forest, far and far,
Where all the wild things are,
And never, never shall come back!

EDGAR FAWCETT

1847–1904

356. *The Old Beau*

HOW cracked and poor his laughter rings!
How dulled his eye once flashing warm!
But still a courtly pathos clings
About his bent and withered form.

To-night where mirth and music dwells,
His wrinkled cheek, his locks of snow
Gleam near the grandsons of the belles
He smiled on forty years ago!

We watch him here, and half believe
Our gaze may witness, while he prates,
Death, like a footman, touch his sleeve
And tell him that the carriage waits.

357. *To the Evening Star*

AGAIN, pale noiseless prophetess of night,
I watch you dawn, your immemorial way,
And watch again your calm immaculate light
Beam wistful on the dying smile of day!

Star wherewith dusk so chastely is impearled,
If that you live for love indeed be true,
This yearning sorrowing sinful weary world
Hath deep unutterable need of you!

Does love in truth make your white bloom his own
And thrill to blander gleams your luminous breast,
Meek silver lily, blossoming all alone
In those dim flowerless meadows of the west?

Aloof your glimmering kindred burn and beat,
High up in boundless quietudes of space,
And gazing on their dark domain, we meet
The cold and awful infinite face to face!

But you are rich with radiance more divine,
  And pulsing as with balmiest pity's birth,
And tenderer, like a star not proud to shine,
  And lowlier, like a star that loves the earth!

And I, who watch your splendors quivering clear,
  Dream, ere from heavenly distance you depart,
Of some invisible mercy's falling tear,
  Of some invisible mercy's throbbing heart!

WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

358. *A Sea-Prayer*

LORD of wind and water
  Where the ships go down
Reaching to the sunrise,
Lifting like a crown,

Out of the deep-hidden
Wells of night and day —
Mind the great sea-farers
On the open way.

When the last lights darken
On the far coastline,
Wave and port and peril,
Yea — Lord — all are thine.

359. *Connecticut Road Song*

IN the wide and rocky pasture where the cedar trees are gray,
The briar rose was growing with the blueberry and bay.
The girls went forth to pick them and the lads went forth to play,
But I had to get to Stonington before the break of day.

And when I came to Stonington she was a town of pride.
"Come in," they said, "and labor, and be at home and bide.
For gold shall be thy wage," but 't was past the hour of morn —
And I had to get to Jordan while the dew was on the thorn.

There is a girl at Jordan, she sweetly smiled at me,
As pale as are the berries on the gray cedar tree.
And "Oh," she cried, "thou traveller, come bide awhile with me,"
But I had to get to Lebanon while light was in the tree.

The pale church spires of Lebànon shone sweet upon the sky.
The Sabbath bells were ringing, the parson passed me by.
"Oh, wait, traveller, wait, for you've need to say a prayer,"
But I had to be in Wallingford while noon was in the air.

The road that leads to Wallingford, it runs through mire
and stone.
I was parchëd with the dust, I was bleeding and alone.
" My lad, you will die, if you do not tarry here."
But I had to get to Killingworth while day was on the
mere.

And when I got to Killingworth I heard the people say:
" He has come to bring the news from a hundred miles
away."
But I had not any news and not any time to stay,
For I had to be at Jericho before the end of day —

And when I came to Jericho I heard the people call,
" Do you run to save a city that you will not wait at all? "
" I ran to save no city, yet must I leave you soon,
For I have to be in Windsor with the rising of the
moon."

And when I got to Windsor, then was I spent for bread.
" Come in," they cried, " poor traveller! and be thou com-
forted.
What strange great need is on thee that makes thee journey
so? "
But I had to be in Coventry ere yet the moon was low.

For a strange great need was on me that I should hunt
the rain,
And take into my body a breakage and a pain;
That I should tame the sunset and goad the hurrying
plain,
And that the leagues behind me should lie a thousand
slain.

Wherefore, ye men of Coventry, if ye desire to stay,
Lay not your curb upon me, that love the open way.
For I want to smell the dew, the blueberry and the bay,
And I have to get to Colchester before the break of day.

360. *The Monk in the Kitchen*

I

ORDER is a lovely thing;
On disarray it lays its wing,
Teaching simplicity to sing.
It has a meek and lowly grace,
Quiet as a nun's face.
Lo — I will have thee in this place!
Tranquil well of deep delight,
Transparent as the water, bright —
All things that shine through thee appear

As stones through water, sweetly clear.
Thou clarity,
That with angelic charity
Revealest beauty where thou art,
Spread thyself like a clean pool.
Then all the things that in thee are
Shall seem more spiritual and fair,
Reflections from serener air —
Sunken shapes of many a star
In the high heavens set afar.

II

Ye stolid, homely, visible things,
Above you all brood glorious wings
Of you deep entities, set high,
Like slow moons in a hidden sky.
But you, their likenesses, are spent
Upon another element.
Truly ye are but seemings —
The shadowy cast-off gleamings
Of bright solidities. Ye seem
Soft as water, vague as dream;
Image, cast in a shifting stream.

III

What are ye?
I know not.
Brazen pan and iron pot
Yellow brick and great flag-stone
That my feet have trod upon —
Ye seem to me
Vessels of bright mystery.
For ye do bear a shape, and so
Though ye were made by man, I know
An inner Spirit also made
And ye his breathings have obeyed.

IV

Shape the strong and awful Spirit,
Laid his ancient hand on you.
He waste chaos doth inherit;
He can alter and subdue.

Verily, he doth lift up
Matter, like a sacred cup.
Into deep substance he reached, and lo
Where ye were not, ye were; and so
Out of useless nothing, ye
Groaned and laughed and came to be.
And I use you, as I can,
Wonderful uses, made for man,
Iron pot and brazen pan.

V

What are ye?
I know not;
Nor what I really do
When I move and govern you.
There is no small work unto God.
He requires of us greatness;
Of his least creature
A high angelic nature,
Stature superb and bright completeness.
He sets to us no humble duty.
Each act that he would have us do
Is haloed round with strangest beauty.
Terrific deeds and cosmic tasks
Of his plainest child he asks.
When I polish the brazen pan
I hear a creature laugh afar
In the gardens of a star,
And from his burning presence run
Flaming wheels of many a sun.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.

When I cleanse this earthen floor
My spirit leaps to see
Bright garments trailing over it.
Wonderful lustres cover it,
A cleanness made by me.
Purger of all men's thoughts and ways,
With labor do I sound Thy praise,
My work is done for Thee.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
Therefore let me spread abroad
The beautiful cleanness of my God.

VI

One time in the cool of dawn
Angels came and worked with me.
The air was soft with many a wing.
They laughed amid my solitude
And cast bright looks on everything.
Sweetly of me did they ask
That they might do my common task.
And all were beautiful — but one
With garments whiter than the sun
Had such a face
Of deep, remembered grace,
That when I saw I cried — "Thou art
The great Blood-Brother of my heart.
Where have I seen thee?" — And he said,
"When we are dancing 'round God's throne,
How often thou art there.

Beauties from thy hands have flown
Like white doves wheeling in mid-air.
Nay — thy soul remembers not?
Work on, and cleanse thy iron pot."

VII

What are we? I know not.

361. *Songs for My Mother*

I

MY mother's hands are cool and fair,
They can do anything.
Delicate mercies hide them there
Like flowers in the spring.

When I was small and could not sleep,
She used to come to me,
And with my cheek upon her hand
How sure my rest would be.

For everything she ever touched
Of beautiful or fine,
Their memories living in her hands
Would warm that sleep of mine.

Her hands remember how they played
One time in meadow streams, —
And all the flickering song and shade
Of water took my dreams.

Swift through her haunted fingers pass
  Memories of garden things; —
I dipped my face in flowers and grass
  And sounds of hidden wings.

One time she touched the cloud that kissed
  Brown pastures bleak and far; —
I leaned my cheek into a mist
  And thought I was a star.

All this was very long ago
  And I am grown; but yet
The hand that lured my slumber so
  I never can forget.

For still when drowsiness comes on
  It seems so soft and cool,
Shaped happily beneath my cheek,
  Hollow and beautiful.

II

My mother has the prettiest tricks
  Of words and words and words.
Her talk comes out as smooth and sleek
  As breasts of singing birds.

She shapes her speech all silver fine
  Because she loves it so.
And her own eyes begin to shine
  To hear her stories grow.

And if she goes to make a call
  Or out to take a walk
We leave our work when she returns
  And run to hear her talk.

We had not dreamed these things were so
  Of sorrow and of mirth.
Her speech is as a thousand eyes
  Through which we see the earth.

God wove a web of loveliness,
  Of clouds and stars and birds,
But made not any thing at all
  So beautiful as words.

They shine around our simple earth
  With golden shadowings,
And every common thing they touch
  Is exquisite with wings.

There's nothing poor and nothing small
  But is made fair with them.
They are the hands of living faith
  That touch the garment's hem.

They are as fair as bloom or air,
  They shine like any star,
And I am rich who learned from her
  How beautiful they are.

362.

In Rose Time

OH this is the joy of the rose;
That it blows
And goes.

Winter lasts a five-month,
Spring-time stays but one;
Yellow blow the rye-fields
When the rose is done.

Pines are clad at Yuletide
When the birch is bare,
And the holly's greenest
In the frosty air.

Sorrow keeps a stone house
Builded grim and gray;
Pleasure hath a straw thatch
Hung with lanterns gay.

On her petty savings
Niggard Prudence thrives,
Passion, ere the moonset,
Bleeds a thousand lives.

Virtue hath a warm heart —
Folly's dead and drowned;
Friendship hath her own when
Love is underground.

Ah, for me the madness
  Of the spendthrift flower,
Burning myriad sunsets
  In a single hour.

For this is the joy of the rose;
  That it blows,
    And goes.

363. *In Media Vita*

STREAMS of the spring a-singing,
  Winds of the May that blow,
Birds from the Southland winging,
  Buds in the grasses below.
Clouds that speed hurrying over,
  And the climbing rose by the wall
Singing of bees in the clover,
  And the dead, under all!

Lads and their sweethearts lying
  In the cleft of the windy hill;
Hearts that hushed of their sighing,
  Lips that are tender and still.
Stars in the purple gloaming,
  Flowers that suffice and fall,
Twitter of bird-mates homing,
  And the dead, under all!

Herdsman abroad with his collie,
Girls on their way to the fair,
Hot lads a-chasing their folly,
Parsons a-praying their prayer.
Children their kites a-flying,
Grandsires that nod by the wall,
Mothers soft lullabies sighing,
And the dead, under all!

364. *Poppies in Ludlow Castle*

THROUGH halls of vanished pleasure,
And hold of vanished power,
And crypt of faith forgotten,
I came to Ludlow tower.

A-top of arch and stairway,
Of crypt and donjon cell,
Of council hall and chamber,
Of wall and ditch and well,

High over grated arches
Where clinging ivies run,
A thousand scarlet poppies
Enticed the rising sun.

Upon the topmost turret,
With death and damp below,—
Three hundred years of spoilage,—
The crimson poppies grow.

This hall it was that bred him,
  These halls that knew him brave,
The gentlest English singer
  That fills an English grave.

How have they heart to blossom
  So cruel gay and red,
When beauty so hath perished.
  And valor so hath sped?

When knights so fair are rotten,
  And captains true asleep,
And singing lips are dust-stopped,
  Six English earth-feet deep?

When ages old remind me
  How much hath gone for naught,
What wretched ghost remaineth
  Of all that flesh hath wrought;

Of love and song and warring,
  Of adventure and play,
Of art and comely building,
  Of faith and form and fray.

I'll mind the flowers of pleasure,
  Of short-lived youth and sleep,
That drank the sunny weather
  Atop of Ludlow keep.

1869–

365. *Two Men*

THESE be two men of all mankind
That I should like to know about;
But search the question where I will,
I cannot ever find them out.

Melchizedek he praised the Lord,
And gave some wine to Abraham;
But who can tell what else he did
Must be more learned than I am.

Ucalegon he lost his house
When Agamemnon came to Troy;
But who can tell me who he was —
I'll pray the gods to give him joy.

These be two men of all mankind
That I'm forever thinking on:
They chase me everywhere I go, —
Melchizedek, Ucalegon.

366. *John Evereldown*

WHERE are you going to-night, to-night, —
Where are you going, John Evereldown?
There's never the sign of a star in sight,
Nor a lamp that's nearer than Tilbury Town.
Why do you stare as a dead man might?
Where are you pointing away from the light?
And where are you going to-night, to-night, —
Where are you going, John Evereldown? "

"Right through the forest, where none can see,
  There's where I'm going, to Tilbury Town.
The men are asleep, — or awake, may be, —
  But the women are calling John Evereldown.
Ever and ever they call for me,
And while they call can a man be free?
So right through the forest, where none can see,
  There's where I'm going, to Tilbury Town."

"But why are you going so late, so late, —
  Why are you going, John Evereldown?
Though the road be smooth and the path be straight,
  There are two long leagues to Tilbury Town.
Come in by the fire, old man, and wait!
Why do you chatter out there by the gate?
And why are you going so late, so late, —
  Why are you going, John Evereldown?"

"I follow the women wherever they call, —
  That's why I'm going to Tilbury Town.
God knows if I pray to be done with it all,
  But God's no friend of John Evereldown.
So the clouds may come and the rain may fall,
The shadows may creep and the dead men crawl, —
But I follow the women wherever they call,
  And that's why I'm going to Tilbury Town."

367. *Miniver Cheevy*

MINIVER CHEEVY, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediaeval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

368. *Flammonde*

THE man Flammonde, from God knows where,
With firm address and foreign air,
With news of nations in his talk
And something royal in his walk,
With glint of iron in his eyes,
But never doubt or yet surprise,
Appeared, and stayed, and held his head
As one by kings accredited.

Erect, with his alert repose
About him, and about his clothes,
He pictured all tradition hears
Of what we owe to fifty years.
His cleansing heritage of taste
Paraded neither want nor waste;
And what he needed for his fee
To live, he borrowed graciously.

He never told us what he was,
Or what mischance, or other cause,
Had banished him from better days
To play the Prince of Castaways.
Meanwhile he played surpassing well
A part, for most, unplayable;
In fine, one pauses, half afraid
To say for certain that he played.

For that, one may as well forego
Conviction as to yes or no;
Nor can I say just how intense
Would then have been the difference
To several, who, having striven
In vain to get what he was given,
Would see the stranger taken on
By friends not easy to be won.

Moreover, many a malcontent
He soothed and found munificent;
His courtesy beguiled and foiled
Suspicion that his years were soiled;
His mien distinguished any crowd,
His credit strengthened when he bowed;
And women, young and old, were fond
Of looking at the man Flammonde.

There was a woman in our town
On whom the fashion was to frown;
But while our talk renewed the tinge
Of a long-faded scarlet fringe,

The man Flammonde saw none of that,
And what he saw we wondered at —
That none of us, in her distress,
Could hide or find our littleness.

There was a boy that all agreed
Had shut within him the rare seed
Of learning. We could understand,
But none of us could lift a hand.
The man Flammonde appraised the youth,
And told a few of us the truth;
And thereby, for a little gold,
A flowered future was unrolled.

There were two citizens who fought
For years and years, and over nought;
They made life awkward for their friends,
And shortened their own dividends.
The man Flammonde said what was wrong
Should be made right; nor was it long
Before they were again in line,
And had each other in to dine.

And these I mention are but four
Of many out of many more.
So much for them. But what of him —
So firm in every look and limb?
What small satanic sort of kink
Was in his brain? What broken link
Withheld him from the destinies
That came so near to being his?

What was he, when we came to sift
His meaning, and to note the drift
Of incommunicable ways
That make us ponder while we praise?
Why was it that his charm revealed
Somehow the surface of a shield?
What was it that we never caught?
What was he, and what was he not?

How much it was of him we met
We cannot ever know; nor yet
Shall all he gave us quite atone
For what was his, and his alone;
Nor need we now, since he knew best,
Nourish an ethical unrest;
Rarely at once will nature give
The power to be Flammonde and live.

We cannot know how much we learn
From those who never will return,
Until a flash of unforeseen
Remembrance falls on what has been.
We've each a darkening hill to climb;
And this is why, from time to time
In Tilbury Town, we look beyond
Horizons for the man Flammonde.

KATHARINE LEE BATES

369. *America the Beautiful*

O BEAUTIFUL for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!

KATHARINE LEE BATES

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

MARY PERRY KING

370. *Hymn of Freedom*

UNFURL the flag of Freedom,
Fling far the bugle blast!
There comes a sound of marching
From out the mighty past.
Let every hill and hollow
Take up the valiant cry:
Where, beautiful as morning,
Our banner cuts the sky.

Free-born to peace and justice,
We stand to guard and save
The liberty of manhood,
The faith our fathers gave.
Then soar aloft, Old Glory,
And tell the waiting breeze
No law but Right and Mercy
Shall rule the Seven Seas.

No hate is in our anger,
No vengeance in our wrath;
We hold the line of freedom
Across the tyrant's path.
Wher'er oppression vaunteth
We loose the sword once more,
To stay the feet of conquest,
And pray an end of war.

FREDERICK PETERSON

1859–

371. *Wild Geese*

HOW oft against the sunset sky or moon
I watched that moving zigzag of spread wings
In unforgotten Autumns gone too soon,
In unforgotten Springs!
Creatures of desolation, far they fly
Above all lands bound by the curling foams;
In misty fens, wild moors and trackless sky
These wild things have their home.
They know the tundra of Siberian coasts.
And tropic marshes by the Indian seas;
They know the clouds and night and starry hosts
From Crux to Pleiades.
Dark flying rune against the western glow —
It tells the sweep and loneliness of things,
Symbol of Autumns vanished long ago.
Symbol of coming Springs!

372. *The Bridge*

ACROSS the foaming river
The old bridge bends its bow;
My father's fathers built it
In ages long ago.

They never left the farmstead
Past which the waters curled,
Why should one ever wander
When here is all the world.

Family, friends, and garden;
Small fields of rice and tea;
The cattle in the meadow;
The birds in stream and tree;

The pageant of the seasons
As the slow years go by;
Between the peaks above us
An azure bridge of sky.

The dead they live and linger
In each familiar place
With kindly thoughts to hearten
The children of their race.

HARRIET MONROE

1860–

373. *Love Song*

I LOVE my life, but not too well
To give it to thee like a flower,
So it may pleasure thee to dwell
Deep in its perfume but an hour.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To sing it note by note away,
So to thy soul the song may tell
The beauty of the desolate day.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To cast it like a cloak on thine,
Against the storms that sound and swell
Between thy lonely heart and mine.
I love my life, but not too well.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

1869–

374. *Hare Drummer*

DO the boys and girls go to Siever's
For cider, after school, in late September?
Or gather hazel nuts among the thickets
On Aaron Hatfield's farm when the frosts begin?

For many times with the laughing girls and boys
Played I along the road and over the hills
When the sun was low and the air was cool,
Stopping to club the walnut tree
Standing leafless against a flaming west.
Now, the swell of autumn smoke,
And the dropping acorns,
And the echoes about the vales
Bring dreams of life. They hover over me.
They question me:
Where are those laughing comrades?
How many are with me, how many
In the old orchards along the way to Siever's,
And in the woods that overlook
The quiet water?

GEORGE STERLING

1869–1926

375. *The Black Vulture*

ALOOF upon the day's immeasured dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home —
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.

And least of all he holds the human swarm —
Unwitting now that envious men prepare
To make their dream and its fulfillment one,
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
His roads between the thunder and the sun.

376. *The Last Days*

THE russet leaves of the sycamore
Lie at last on the valley floor —
By the autumn wind swept to and fro
Like ghosts in a tale of long ago.
Shallow and clear the Carmel glides
Where the willows droop on its vine-walled sides.

The bracken-rust is red on the hill;
The pines stand brooding, somber and still;
Gray are the cliffs, and the waters gray,
Where the seagulls dip to the sea-born spray.
Sad November, lady of rain,
Sends the goose-wedge over again.

Wilder now, for the verdure's birth,
Falls the sunlight over the earth;
Killdees call from the fields where now
The banding blackbirds follow the plow;
Rustling poplar and brittle weed
Whisper low to the river-reed.

Days departing linger and sigh:
Stars come soon to the quiet sky;
Buried voices, intimate, strange,
Cry to body and soul of change;
Beauty, eternal fugitive,
Seeks the home that we cannot give.

377. *Kindred*

MUSING, between the sunset and the dark,
As Twilight in unhesitating hands
Bore from the faint horizon's underlands,
Silvern and chill, the moon's phantasmal ark,
I heard the sea, and far away could mark
Where that unalterable waste expands
In sevenfold sapphire from the mournful sands,
And saw beyond the deep a vibrant spark.

There sank the sun Arcturus, and I thought:
Star, by an ocean on a world of thine,
May not a being, born like me to die,
Confront a little the eternal Naught
And watch our isolated sun decline —
Sad for his evanescence, even as I?

T. A. DALY

1871–

378. *A Child's Christmas Song*

LORD, I'm just a little boy
Born one day like You,
And I've got a mother dear
And a birthday, too.
But my birthday comes in spring,
When the days are long,
And the robin in the tree
Wakens me with song.
Since the birds are all away,
Lord, when You are born,
Let Your angels waken me
On Your birthday morn.

Lord, I'm just a little boy,
Hidden in the night;
Let Your angels spy me out
Long before it's light.
I would be the first to wake
And the first to raise
In this quiet house of ours
Songs of love and praise.
You shall hear me first, dear Lord,
Blow my Christmas horn;
Let Your angels waken me
On Your birthday morn.

T. A. DALY

379. *For Old Lovers*

THE sap is bubbling in the tree,
The pink buds herald spring.
Yet winter holds for you and me
One charm to which we cling.
The April sun grows warm by noon,
Its daylight skies are bright;
But the cool evenings bring the boon
Of a wood fire at night.

The greening sod of April days
Is lovely to the eye,
But firmer, lovelier turf is May's
And kindlier glows the sky.
Let striplings to the greenwood go
For April's chill delight,
But we two still shall bless the glow
Of a wood fire at night.

AMY LOWELL

1874–1925

380. *Venus Transiens*

TELL me,
Was Venus more beautiful
Than you are,
When she topped
The crinkled waves,
Drifting shoreward
On her plaited shell?

Was Botticelli's vision
Fairer than mine;
And were the painted rosebuds
He tossed his lady,
Of better worth
Than the words I blow about you
To cover your too great loveliness
As with a gauze
Of misted silver?

For me,
You stand poised
In the blue and buoyant air,
Cinctured by bright winds,
Treading the sunlight.
And the waves which precede you
Ripple and stir
The sands at your feet.

381. *Madonna of the Evening Flowers*

ALL day long I have been working,
Now I am tired.
I call: "Where are you?"
But there is only the oak tree rustling in the wind.
The house is very quiet,
The sun shines in on your books,
On your scissors and thimble just put down,
But you are not there.
Suddenly I am lonely:
Where are you?
I go about searching.

Then I see you,
Standing under a spire of pale blue larkspur,
With a basket of roses on your arm.
You are cool, like silver,
And you smile.
I think the Canterbury bells are playing little tunes,
You tell me that the peonies need spraying,
That the columbines have overrun all bounds,
That the pyrus japonica should be cut back and
rounded.
You tell me these things.
But I look at you, heart of silver,
White heart-flame of polished silver,
Burning beneath the blue steeples of the larkspur,
And I long to kneel instantly at your feet,
While all about us peal the loud, sweet, Te Deums of the
Canterbury bells.

382. *Patterns*

I WALK down the garden-paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden-paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden-paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whale-bone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime-tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep;
For the lime-tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden-paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding.
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.

What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled upon the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword-hilt and the buckles on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover,
Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me
Aching, melting, unafraid.
With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon —
I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun sifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom,
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke,
"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday se'nnight."
As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.

"Any answer, Madam?" said my footman.
"No," I told him.
"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer."
And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.
I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown.
Up and down I walked,

Up and down.
In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
We would have broke the pattern;
He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady,
On this shady seat.
He had a whim
That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden-paths
In my stiff brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils

Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to
snow.
I shall go
Up and down,
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from em-
brace
By each button, hook and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?

383. *Apology*

BE not angry with me that I bear
Your colors everywhere,
All through each crowded street,
And meet
The wonder-light in every eye,
As I go by.

Each plodding wayfarer looks up to gaze
Blinded by rainbow-haze,
The stuff of happiness,
No less,
Which wraps me in its glad-hued folds
Of peacock golds.

Before my feet the dusty, rough-paved way
Flushes beneath its gray.
My steps fall ringed with light,
  So bright
It seems a myriad suns are strown
About the town.

You blazen me with jewelled insignia.
A flaming nebula
Rims in my life. And yet
You set
The word upon me, unconfessed,
To go unguessed.

384. *The Precinct — Rochester*

THE tall yellow hollyhocks stand,
  Still and straight,
With their round blossoms spread open,
In the quiet sunshine.
And still is the old Roman wall,
Rough with jagged bits of flint,
And jutting stones,
Old and cragged,
Quite still in its antiquity.
The pear-trees press their branches against it,
And feeling it warm and kindly,
The little pears ripen to yellow and red.
They hang heavy, bursting with juice,
Against the wall.

So old, so still!
The sky is still.
The clouds make no sound
As they slide away
Beyond the Cathedral Tower
To the river,
And the sea,
It is very quiet
Very sunny.
The myrtle flowers stretch themselves in the sunshine,
But make no sound.
The roses push their little tendrils up,
And climb higher and higher.
In spots they have climbed over the wall.
But they are very still,
They do not seem to move.
And the old wall carries them
Without effort, and quietly
Ripens and shields the vines and blossoms.

A bird in a plane-tree
Sings a few notes,
Cadenced and perfect
They weave into the silence.
The Cathedral bell knocks,
One, Two, Three, and again,
And then again.
It is a quiet sound,
Calling to prayer,
Hardly scattering the stillness,
Only making it close in more densely.
The gardener picks ripe gooseberries

For the Dean's supper tonight.
It is very quiet
Very regulated and mellow.
But the wall is old.
It has known many days.
It is a Roman wall,
Left-over and forgotten.
Beyond the Cathedral close
Yelp and mutter the discontents of people not mellow,
Not well-regulated.
People who care more for bread than for beauty,
Who would break the tombs of saints,
And give the painted windows of churches
To their children for toys.
People who say:
"They are dead, we live!
The world is for the living."

Fools! It is always the dead who breed,
Crush the ripe fruit, and cast it aside
Yet its seeds shall fructify,
And trees rise where your huts were standing.
But the little people are ignorant,
They chaffer, and swarm.
They gnaw like rats,
And the foundations of the Cathedral are honey-combed.

The Dean is in the Chapter House;
He is reading the architect's bill
For the completed restoration of the Cathedral,
He will have ripe gooseberries for supper,

And then he will walk up and down the path
By the wall,
And admire the snapdragons and dahlias,
Thinking how quiet and peaceful
The garden is.
The old wall will watch him,
Very quietly and patiently it will watch.
For the wall is old,
It is a Roman wall.

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

1874–1922

385. *The Cloud*

THE islands called me far away,
The valleys called me home.
The rivers with a silver voice
Drew on my heart to come.

The paths reached tendrils to my hair
From every vine and tree.
There was no refuge anywhere
Until I came to thee.

There is a northern cloud I know,
Along a mountain crest;
And as she folds her wings of mist,
So I could make my rest.

There is no chain to bind her so
  Unto that purple height;
And she will shine and wander, slow,
  Slow, with a cloud's delight.

Would she begone? She melts away,
  A heavenly joyous thing.
Yet day will find the mountain white,
  White-folded with her wing.

As you may see, but half aware
  If it be late or soon,
Soft breathing on the day-time air,
  The fair forgotten Moon.

And though love cannot bind me, Love,
  — Ah no! — yet I could stay
Maybe, with wings forever spread,
  — Forever, and a day.

386. *A Song of Solomon*

KING SOLOMON was the wisest man
  Of all that have been kings.
He built an House unto the Lord;
  And he sang of creeping things.

Of creeping things, of things that fly,
  Or swim within the seas;
Of the little weed along the wall,
  And of the cedar-trees.

And happier he, without mistake,
Than all men since alive.
God's House he built; and he did make
A thousand songs and five.

THEODOSIA GARRISON

1874-

387. *A Love Song*

MY love it should be silent, being deep —
And being very peaceful should be still —
Still as the utmost depths of ocean keep —
Serenely silent as some mighty hill.

Yet is my love so great it needs must fill
With very joy the inmost heart of me,
The joy of dancing branches on the hill
The joy of leaping waves upon the sea.

388. *The Dreamers*

THE gypsies passed her little gate —
She stopped her wheel to see —
A brown-faced pair who walked the road,
Free as the wind is free;
And suddenly her tidy room
A prison seemed to be.

Her shining plates against the walls,
Her sunlit sanded floor,
The brass-bound wedding chest that held
Her linen's snowy store,
The very wheel whose humming died, —
Seemed only chains she bore.

She watched the foot-free gypsies pass;
She never knew or guessed
The wistful dream that drew them close —
The longing in each breast
Some day to know a home like hers,
Wherein their hearts might rest.

ROBERT FROST

1875-

389. *Storm Fear*

WHEN the wind works against us in the dark,
And pelts with snow
The lower chamber window on the east,
And whispers with a sort of stifled bark,
The beast,
"Come out! Come out!" —
It costs no inward struggle not to go,
Ah, no!
I count our strength,
Two and a child,
Those of us not asleep subdued to mark
How the cold creeps as the fire dies at length, —
How drifts are piled,

Dooryard and road ungraded,
Till even the comforting barn grows far away
And my heart owns a doubt
Whether 'tis in us to arise with day
And save ourselves unaided.

390. *The Telephone*

WHEN I was just as far as I could walk
From here today,
There was an hour
All still
When leaning with my head against a flower
I heard you talk.
Don't say I didn't, for I heard you say —
You spoke from that flower on the window sill —
Do you remember what it was you said? "

"First tell me what it was you thought you heard."

"Having found the flower and driven a bee away,
I leaned my head,
And holding by the stalk,
I listened and I thought I caught the word —
What was it? Did you call me by my name?
Or did you say —
Someone said 'Come' — I heard it as I bowed."

"I may have thought as much, but not aloud."

"Well, so I came."

391. *The Road Not Taken*

TWO roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

392. *Good-bye and Keep Cold*

THIS saying good-bye on the verge of the dark
And cold to an orchard so young in the bank,
Reminds me of all that can happen to harm
An orchard away at the end of the farm
All winter cut off by a hill from the house.
I don't want it girdled by rabbit and mouse,
I don't want it dreamily nibbled for browse
By deer, and I don't want it budded by grouse,
(If certain it wouldn't be idle to call,
I'd summon grouse, rabbit and deer to the wall
And warn them away with a stick for a gun.)
I don't want it spitted by the heat of the sun.
(We made it secure against being, I hope,
By setting it out on a northerly slope.)
No orchard's the worse for the wintriest storm,
But one thing about it, it mustn't get warm.
"How often already you've had to be told
Keep cold, young orchard. Good-bye and keep cold.
Dread fifty above more than fifty below."
I have to be gone for a season or so;
My business awhile is with different trees,
Less carefully nurtured, less fruitful than these
And such as is done to their wood with an ax —
Maples and birches and tamaracks.
I wish I could promise to lie in the night
And share in an orchard's arboreal plight,
When slowing (and nobody comes with a light!)
Its heart sinks lower under the sod;
But something has to be left to God.

393. *The Onset*

ALWAYS the same when on a fated night
At last the gathered snow lets down as white
As may be in dark woods and with a song
It shall not make again all winter long —
Of hissing on the yet uncovered ground, —
I almost stumble looking up and round,
As one who, overtaken by the end,
Give's up his errand and lets death descend
Upon him where he is, with nothing done
To evil, no important triumph won
More than if life had never been begun.
Yet all the precedent is on my side:
I know that winter death has never tried
The earth but it has failed; the snow may heap
In long storms an undrifted four feet deep
As measured against maple, birch and oak;
It cannot check the Peeper's silver croak;
And I shall see the snow all go down the hill
In water of a slender April rill
That flashes tail through last year's withered brake
And dead weeds like a disappearing snake.
Nothing will be left white but here a birch
And there a clump of houses with a church.

394. *My November Guest*

MY sorrow, when she's here with me,
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be;
She loves the bare, the withered tree;
She walks the sodden pasture lane.

Her pleasure will not let me stay.
She talks and I am fain to list:
She's glad the birds are gone away,
She's glad her simple worsted grey
Is silver now with clinging mist.

The desolate, deserted trees,
The faded earth, the heavy sky,
The beauties she so truly sees,
She thinks I have no eye for these,
And vexes me for reason why.

Not yesterday I learned to know
The love of bare November days
Before the coming of the snow;
But it were vain to tell her so,
And they are better for her praise.

RIDGELY TORRENCE

1875–

395. *Evensong*

BEAUTY calls and gives no warning,
Shadows rise and wander on the day.
In the twilight, in the quiet evening,
We shall rise and smile and go away.
Over the flaming leaves
Freezes the sky.
It is the season grieves,
Not you, not I.
All our spring-times, all our summers,
We have kept the longing warm within.
Now we leave the after-comers
To attain the dreams we did not win.
Oh, we have wakened, Sweet, and had our birth,
And that's the end of earth;
And we have toiled and smiled and kept the light,
And that's the end of night.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

1877–

396. *Song*

I SAW the day's white rapture
Die in the sunset's flame,
But all her shining beauty
Lives like a deathless name.

Our lamps of joy are wasted,
Gone is love's hallowed light;
But you and I remember
Through every starlit night.

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

1878–

397. *"The Little Rose is Dust, My Dear"*

THE little rose is dust, my dear;
The elfin wind is gone
That sang a song of silver words
And cooled our hearts with dawn.

And what is left to hope, my dear,
Or what is left to say?
The rose, the little wind and you
Have gone so far away.

398. *The Whole Duty of Berkshire Brooks*

TO build the trout a crystal stair;
To comb the hillside's thick green hair;
To water jewel-weed and rushes;
To teach first notes to baby thrushes;
To flavor raspberry and apple
And make a whirling pool to dapple
With scattered gold of late October;
To urge wise laughter on the sober
And lend a dream to those who laugh;
To chant the beetle's epitaph;
To mirror the blue dragonfly,
Frail air-plane of a slender sky;
Over the stones to lull and leap
Herding the bubbles like white sheep;
The claims of worry to deny,
And whisper sorrow into sleep!

H. H. KNIBBS

1874–

399. *The Trail Makers*

NORTH and west along the coast among the misty islands,
Sullen in the grip of night and smiling in the day:
Nunivak and Akutan, with Nome against the highlands,
On we drove with plated prow agleam with frozen spray.

Loud we sang adventuring and lustily we jested;
Quarreled, fought, and then forgot the taunt, the blow, the jeers;
Named a friend and clasped a hand — a compact sealed, attested;
Shared tobacco, yarns, and drink, and planned surpassing years.

Then — the snow that locked the trail where famine's shadow followed
Out across the blinding white and through the stabbing cold,
Past tents along the tundra over faces blotched and hollowed;
Toothless mouths that babbled foolish songs of hidden gold.

Wisdom, lacking sinews for the toil, gave over trying;
Fools, with thews of iron, blundered on and won the fight;

Weaklings drifted homeward; else they tarried — worse than dying —
With the painted lips and wastrels on the edges of the night.

Berries of the saskatoon were ripening and falling;
Flowers decked the barren with its timber scant and low;
All along the river-trail were many voices calling,
And e'en the whimpering Malemutes they heard — and whined to go.

Eyelids seared with fire and ice and frosted parka-edges;
Firelight like a spray of blood on the faces lean and brown;
Shifting shadows of the pines across our loaded sledges;
And far behind the fading trail, the lights and lures of town.

So we played the bitter game nor asked for praise or pity:
Wind and wolf they found the bones that blazed out lonely trails. . . .
Where a dozen shacks were set, today there blooms a city;
Now where once was empty blue, there pass a thousand sails.

Scarce a peak that does not mark the grave of those who perished
Nameless, lost to lips of men who followed, gleaning fame
From the soundless triumph of adventurers who cherished
Naught above the glory of a chance to play the game.

Half the toil — and we have won to wealth in other station;
Rusted out as useless ere our worth was tried and known.
But the Hand that made us caught us up and hewed a nation
From the frozen fastness that so long was His alone.

. . . . . .

Loud we sang adventuring and lustily, we jested;
Quarreled, fought, and then forgot the taunt, the blow, the jeers;
Sinned and slaved and vanished — we, the giant-men who wrested
Truth from out a dream wherein we planned surpassing years.

ADELAIDE CRAPSEY

1878–1914

400. *Dirge*

NEVER the nightingale,
Oh, my dear,
Never again the lark
Thou wilt hear;
Though dusk and the morning still
Tap at thy window-sill,
Though ever love call and call
Thou wilt not hear at all,
My dear, my dear.

ADELAIDE CRAPSEY

401. *Vendor's Song*

MY songs to sell, good sir!
I pray you buy.
Here's one will win a lady's tears,
Here's one will make her gay,
Here's one will charm your true love true
Forever and a day;
Good sir, I pray you buy!

Oh, no, he will not buy.

My songs to sell, sweet maid!
I pray you buy.
This one will teach you Lilith's lore,
And this what Helen knew,
And this will keep your gold hair gold,
And this your blue eyes blue;
Sweet maid, I pray you buy!

Oh, no, she will not buy.

If I'd as much money as I could tell,
I never would cry my songs to sell,
I never would cry my songs to sell.

VACHEL LINDSAY

1879–

402. *The Flower of Mending*

WHEN Dragon-fly would fix his wings,
When Snail would patch his house,
When moths have marred the overcoat
Of tender Mister Mouse,

The pretty creatures go with haste
To the sunlit blue-grass hills
Where the Flower of Mending yields the wax
And webs to help their ills.

The hour the coats are waxed and webbed
They fall into a dream,
And when they wake the ragged robes
Are joined without a seam.

My heart is but a dragon-fly,
My heart is but a mouse,
My heart is but a haughty snail
In a little stony house.

Your hand was honey-comb to heal,
Your voice a web to bind.
You were a Mending Flower to me
To cure my heart and mind.

403. *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight*

IT is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down.

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high-top hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us:— as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kins.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why,
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come:— the shining hope of Europe free:
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

404. *General William Booth Enters into Heaven*

To be sung to the tune of "The Blood of the Lamb" with indicated instruments.

BOOTH led boldly with his big bass drum.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
The saints smiled gravely, and they said, "He's come."
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Bass drums
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from alleyways and drug-fiends pale —
Minds still passion-ridden, soul powers frail!
Vermin-eaten saints with mouldy breath
Unwashed legions with the ways of death —
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Every slum has sent its half-a-score
The round world over — Booth had groaned for more.
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang! Banjos
Tranced, fanatical, they shrieked and sang,
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free!
Loons with bazoos blowing blare, blare, blare —
On, on, upward through the golden air.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Booth died blind, and still by faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God. Bass drums slower and softer
Booth led boldly and he looked the chief:

Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land.
Jesus came from out the Court-House door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there — Flutes
Round and round the mighty Court-House square.
Yet in an instant all that blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled
And blind eyes opened on a new sweet world.

Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl; — Bass drums louder and faster
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green!
The hosts were sandalled and their wings were fire —
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
But their noise played havoc with the angel-choir
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? — Grand chorus tambourines all instruments in full blast
Oh, shout Salvation! it was good to see
Kings and princes by the Lamb set free.
The banjos rattled and the tambourines
Jin-jing-jingled in the hands of queens!

And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer — Reverently sung—no instruments
He saw his Master through the flag-filled air.
Christ came gently with a robe and crown
For Booth the soldier while the throng knelt down;
He saw King Jesus — they were face to face,
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.
Are you washed in the blood of the lamb?

1879-

405. *"Scum o' The Earth"*

I

AT the gate of the West I stand,
On the isle where the nations throng.
We call them "scum o' the earth";

Stay, are we doing you wrong,
Young fellow from Socrates' land? —
You, like a Hermes so lissome and strong
Fresh from the Master Praxiteles' hand?
So, you're of Spartan birth?
Descended, perhaps, from one of the band —
Deathless in story and song —
Who combed their long hair at Thermopylæ's pass? . . .
Ah, I forget what straits (alas!),
More tragic than theirs, more compassion-worth,
Have doomed you to march in our "immigrant class"
Where you're nothing but "scum o' the earth."

II

You Pole with the child on your knee,
What dower bring you to the land of the free?
Hark! does she croon
That sad little tune
That Chopin once found on his Polish lea
And mounted in gold for you and for me?
Now a ragged young fiddler answers
In wild Czech melody
That Dvořak took whole from the dancers.

And the heavy faces bloom
In the wonderful Slavic way;
The little, dull eyes, the brows a-gloom,
Suddenly dawn like the day.
While, watching these folk and their mystery,
I forget that we
In our scornful mirth
Brand them as "polacks" — and "scum o' the earth."

III

Genoese boy of the level brow,
Lad of the lustrous, dreamy eyes
A-gaze at Manhattan's pinnacles now
In the first, sweet shock of a hushed surprise;
Within your far-rapt seer's eyes
I catch the glow of the wild surmise
That played on the Santa Maria's prow
In that still gray dawn,
Four centuries gone,
When a world from the wave began to rise.
Oh, who shall foretell what high emprise
Is the goal that gleams
When Italy's dreams
Spread wing and sweep into the skies?
Caesar dreamed him a world ruled well;
Dante dreamed Heaven out of Hell;
Angelo brought us there to dwell.
And you, are you of a different birth? —
You're only a "dago," — and "scum o' the earth"!

IV

Stay, are we doing you wrong
Calling you "scum o' the earth,"

Man of the sorrow-bowed head,
Of the features tender yet strong, —
Man of the eyes full of wisdom and mystery
Mingled with patience and dread?
Have not I known you in history,
Sorrow-bowed head?
Were you the poet-king, worth
Treasures of Ophir unpriced?
Were you the prophet, perchance, whose art
Foretold how the rabble would mock
That shepherd of spirits, ere long,
Who should gather the lambs to his heart
And tenderly feed his flock?
Man — lift that sorrow-bowed head. . . .
Behold, the face of the Christ!

The vision dies at its birth
You're merely a butt for our mirth.
You're a "sheeny" — and therefore despised
And rejected as "scum o' the earth."

Countrymen, bend and invoke
Mercy for us blasphemers,
For that we spat on these marvelous folk,
Nations of darers and dreamers
Scions of singers and seers,
Our peers, and more than our peers.
"Rabble and refuse," we name them.
And "scum o' the earth," to shame them
Mercy for us of the few, young years,
Of the culture so callow and crude,
Of the hands so grasping and rude,

The lips so ready for sneers
At the sons of our ancient more-than-peers.
Mercy for us who dare despise
Men in whose loins our Homer lies;
Mothers of men who shall bring to us
The glory of Titian, the grandeur of Huss;
Children in whose frail arms may rest
Prophets and singers and saints of the West.

Newcomers all from the eastern seas,
Help us incarnate dreams like these.
Forget, and forgive, that we did you wrong.
Help us to father a nation strong
In the comradeship of an equal birth,
In the wealth of the richest bloods of earth.

DON MARQUIS

1878–

406. *The Name*

IT shifts and shifts from form to form,
It drifts and darkles, glooms and glows,
It is the passion of the storm,
The poignance of the rose;
Through changing shapes, through devious ways,
By noon or night, through cloud or flame,
My heart hath followed all my days
Something I cannot name.

In sunlight on some woman's hair,
Or starlight in some woman's eyne —
Or in low laughter smothered where
Her red lips wedded mine —

My heart has known, and thrilled to know,
  This unnamed presence that it sought;
And when thy heart hath found it so,
  "Love is the name," I thought.

Sometimes when sudden afterglows
  In futile glory storm the skies
Within their transient gold and rose
  The secret stirs and dies;
Or when the tamping Morn walks o'er
  The troubled seas with feet of flame
My awed heart whispers, "Ask no more,
  For Beauty is the name!"

Or dreaming in old chapels where
  The dim aisles pulse with murmurings
That part are music, part are prayer —
  (Or rush of hidden wings) —
I often lift a startled head
  To some saint's carven countenance,
Half fancying that the lips have said,
  "All names mean God perchance."

407. *The Nobler Lesson*

CHRIST was of virgin birth, and, being slain,
  The creedists say, He rose from death again.
Oh, futile age-long talk of death and birth! —
His life, that is the one thing wonder-worth;
Not how He came, but how He lived on earth.

For if gods stoop, and with quaint jugglery
Mock nature's laws, how shall that profit thee? —
The nobler lesson is that mortals can
Grow godlike through this baffled front of man!

408. *The God-Maker, Man*

NEVERMORE
Shall the shepherds of Arcady follow
Pan's moods as he lolls by the shore
Of the mere, or lies hid in the hollow;
Nevermore
Shall they start at the sound of his reed-fashioned flute;

Fallen mute
Are the strings of Apollo,
His lyre and his lute;
And the lips of the Memnons are mute
Evermore;
And the gods of the North, — are they dead or forgetful,
Our Odin and Baldur and Thor?
Are they drunk, or grown weary of worship and fretful,
Our Odin and Baldur and Thor?

And into what night have the Orient deities strayed?
Swart gods of the Nile, in dusk splendors arrayed,
Brooding Isis and somber Osiris,
You were gone ere the fragile papyrus,
(That bragged you eternal!) decayed.

The avatars
  But illumine their limited evens
And vanish like plunging stars;
  They are fixed in the whirling heavens
No firmer than falling stars;
Brief lords of the changing soul, they pass
Like a breath from the face of a glass,
  Or a blossom of summer blown shallop-like over
  The clover
And tossed tides of grass.

Sink to silence the psalms and the paeans
  The shibboleths shift, and the faiths,
And the temples that challenged the aeons
  Are tenanted only by wraiths;
Swoon to silence the cymbals and psalters,
  The worships grow senseless and strange,
And the mockers ask, "Where by thy altars?"
  Crying, "Nothing is changeless — but Change!"

Yes, nothing seems changeless, but Change.
And yet, through the creed-wrecking years,
One story for ever appears;
The tale of a City Supernal —
The whisper of Something eternal —
A passion, a hope, and a vision
  That peoples the silence with Powers;
A fable of meadows Elysian
  Where Time enters not with his Hours; —
Manifold are the tale's variations,
  Race and clime ever tinting the dreams,
Yet its essence, through endless mutations,
  Immutable gleams.

Deathless, though godheads be dying,
  Surviving the creeds that expire,
Illogical, reason-defying,
  Lives that passionate, primal desire;
Insistent, persistent, forever
Man cries to the silences, "Never
Shall Death reign the lord of the soul,
Shall the dust be the ultimate goal —
I will storm the black bastions of Night!
  I will tread where my vision has trod,
I will set in the darkness a light,
  In the vastness, a god!"

As the forehead of Man grows broader, so do his creeds;
And his gods they are shaped in his image, and mirror his needs;
And he clothes them with thunders and beauty, he clothes them with music and fire;
Seeing not, as he bows by their altars, that he worships his own desire;
And mixed with his trust there is terror and mixed with his madness is ruth,
And every man grovels in error, yet every man glimpses a truth.

For all of the creeds are false, and all the creeds are true;
And low at the shrines where my brothers bow there will I bow, too;
For no form of god, and no fashion
Man has made in his desperate passion
But is worthy some worship of mine; —

Not too hot with a gross belief,
Nor yet too cold with pride,
I will bow me down where my brothers bow,
Humble — but open-eyed!

409. *From the Bridge*

HELD and thrilled by the vision
I stood, as the twilight died,
Where the great bridge soars like a song
Over the crawling tide —

Stood on the middle arch —
And night flooded in from the bay,
And wonderful under the stars
Before me the city lay;

Girdled with swinging waters —
Guarded by ship on ship —
A gem that the strong old ocean
Held in his giant grip;

There was play of shadows above
And drifting gleams below,
And magic of shifting waves
That darkle and glance and glow;

Dusky and purple and splendid,
Banded with loops of light,
The tall towers rose like pillars,
Lifting the dome of night;

The gliding cars of traffic
  Slid swiftly up and down
Like monsters, fiery mailed,
  Leaping across the town.

Not planned with a thought of beauty;
  Built by a lawless breed;
Builded of lust for power,
  Builded of gold and greed.

Risen out of the trader's
  Brutal and sordid wars —
And yet, behold! a city
  Wonderful under the stars!

AMELIA JOSEPHINE BURR

1878–

410. *A Song of Living*

BECAUSE I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.
I have sent up my gladness on wings, to be lost in the blue of the sky.
I have run and leaped with the rain, I have taken the wind to my breast.
My cheek like a drowsy child to the face of the earth I have pressed.
Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

I have kissed young Love on the lips, I have heard his song to the end.
I have struck my hand like a seal in the loyal hand of a friend.

I have known the peace of heaven, the comfort of work done well.
I have longed for death in the darkness and risen alive out of hell.
Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

I give a share of my soul to the world where my course is run.
I know that another shall finish the task I must leave undone.
I know that no flower, nor flint was in vain on the path I trod.
As one looks on a face through a window, through life I have looked on God.
Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

WITTER BYNNER

1881–

411. *Hills of Home*

NAME me no names for my disease,
With uninforming breath;
I tell you I am none of these,
But homesick unto death —

Homesick for hills that I had known,
For brooks that I had crossed,
Before I met this flesh and bone
And followed and was lost. . . .

And though they break my heart at last,
Yet name no name of ills.
Say only, "Here is where he passed,
Seeking again those hills."

412. *Ghosts of Indians*

INDIAN–FOOTED move the mists
From the corner of the lake,
Silent, sinuous and bent;
And their trailing feathers shake,
Tremble to forgotten leapings,
While with lingerings or creepings
Down they lean again to slake
The dead thirst of parching mouths,
Lean their pale mouths in the lake.

Indian-footed move the mists
That were hiding in the pine,
But upon the oval lake
In a bent and ghostly line
Lean and drink for better sleeping . . .
Then they turn again and — creeping
Gliding as with fur and fins —
Disappear through woods and water
On a thousand moccasins.

THOMAS S. JONES, Jr.

1882–

413. *Dusk at Sea*

TO–NIGHT eternity alone is near;
The sea, the sunset, and the darkening blue;
Within their shelter is no space for fear,
Only the wonder that such things are true.

The thought of you is like the dusk at sea —
Space and wide freedom and old shores left far,
The shelter of a lone immensity
Sealed by the sunset and the evening star.

HERMANN HAGEDORN

1882–

414. *Doors*

LIKE a young child who to his mother's door
Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,
And finds the door shut, and with troubled face
Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er
Calling, storms at the panel — so before
A door that will not open, sick and numb,
I listen for a word that will not come,
And know, at last, I may not enter more.

Silence! And through the silence and the dark
By that closed door, the distant sob of tears
Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores
The spectral sea; and through the sobbing, hark!
Down the fair-chambered corridor of years,
The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors.

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

1883-

415. *To the Harpies*

YOU who with birch or laurel
Are swift to scourge or bless —
Silence your foolish quarrel
Before her loveliness.

What though she went a-travel
Down paths you do not know?
Your words shall not unravel
Webs that allured her so.

Hush now your foolish babble
Around her golden head.
Shut out the prying rabble.
Be happy. She is dead.

Now give one final kindness
That late you dreamed not of —
Silence, to cloak your blindness —
Peace, since you know not love.

416. *"I am in Love with Far-Seeing Places"*

I AM in love with high far-seeing places
That look on plains half-sunlight and half-storm —
In love with hours when from the circling faces
Veils pass, and laughing fellowship glows warm.

You who look on me with grave eyes where rapture
And April love of living burn confessed, —
The Gods are good! The world lies free to capture!
Life has no walls. O take me to your breast!
Take me, — be with me for a moment's span! —
I am in love with all unveilèd faces.
I seek the wonder at the heart of man;
I would go up to the far-seeing places.
While youth is ours, turn toward me for a space
The marvel of your rapture-lighted face!

417. *The Oracle*

I LAY upon the summer grass.
A gold-haired, sunny child came by,
And looked at me, as loath to pass,
With questions in her lingering eye.

She stopped and wavered, then drew near,
(Ah! the pale gold around her head!)
And o'er my shoulder stopped to peer,
"Why do you read?" she said.

"I read a poet of old time,
Why sang through all his living hours —
Beauty of earth — the streams, the flowers —
And stars, more lovely than his rhyme.

"And now I read him, since men go,
Forgetful of these sweetest things;
Since he and I love brooks that flow,
And dawns, and bees, and flash of wings!"

She stared at me with laughing look,
  Then clasped her hands upon my knees:
"How strange to read it in a book!
  I could have told you all of these!"

SARA TEASDALE

1884–

418. *Open Windows*

OUT of the window a sea of green trees
  Lift their soft boughs like the arms of a dancer;
They beckon and call me, "Come out in the sun!"
  But I cannot answer.

I am alone with Weakness and Pain,
  Sick abed and June is going,
I cannot keep her, she hurries by
  With the silver-green of her garments blowing.

Men and women pass in the street
  Glad of the shining sapphire weather;
But we know more of it than they,
  Pain and I together.

They are the runners in the sun,
  Breathless and blinded by the race,
But we are watchers in the shade
  Who speak with Wonder face to face.

419. *Barter*

LIFE has loveliness to sell —
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Climbing fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up
Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell —
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirit's still delight,
Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count for cost;
For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been or could be.

420. *Over the Roofs*

I SAID, "I have shut my heart,
As one shuts an open door,
That Love may starve therein
And trouble me no more."

But over the roofs there came
The wet new wind of May,
And a tune blew up from the curb
Where the street-pianos play.

My room was white with the sun
And Love cried out in me,
"I am strong, I will break your heart
Unless you set me free."

DAVID MORTON

1886-

421. *Ships in Harbor*

I HAVE not known a quieter thing than ships,
Nor any dreamers steeped in dream as these;
For all that they have known disastrous seas,
And winds that left their sails in flagging strips,
Nothing disturbs them now, no stormy grips
That once had hurt their sides, no crash or swell;
Nor can the fretful harbor quite dispel
The quiet that they learned on lonely trips.
They have no part in all your noisy noons;

They are become as dreams of ships that go
Back to the secret waters that they know,
Each as she will, to unforgot lagoons,
Where nothing moves except the ghostly spars
That mark the patient watches on the stars.

DAVID MORTON

422. *Old Ships*

THERE is a memory stays upon old ships,
A weightless cargo in the musty hold, —
Of bright lagoons and prow-caressing lips,
Of stormy midnights, — and a tale untold.
They have remembered islands in the dawn,
And windy capes that tried their slender spars,
The torturous channels where their keels have gone,
And calm, blue nights of stillness and the stars.

Ah, never think that ships forget a shore,
Or bitter seas, or winds that made them wise;
There is a dream upon them, evermore; —
And there be some who say that sunk ships rise
To seek familiar harbors in the night,
Blowing in mists, their spectral sails like light.

ALAN SEEGER

1888–1916

423. *"I Have a Rendezvous with Death"*

I HAVE a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air —
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath —
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear. . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

1885-

424. *Reveille*

WHAT sudden bugle calls us in the night
And wakes us from a dream that we had shaped;
Flinging us sharply up against a fight
We thought we had escaped.

It is no easy waking, and we win
No final peace; our victories are few.
But still imperative forces pull us in
And sweep us somehow through.

Summoned by a supreme and confident power
That wakes our sleeping courage like a blow,
We rise, half-shaken, to the challenging hour,
And answer it — and go.

EZRA POUND

1885–

425. *An Immorality*

SING we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing.

JOYCE KILMER

1886–1918

426. *Rouge Bouquet*

March 7, 1918

IN a wood they call the Rouge Bouquet
There is a new-made grave today,
Built by never a spade nor pick
Yet covered with earth ten metres thick.

There lie many fighting men,
  Dead in their youthful prime,
Never to laugh nor love again
  Nor taste the Summertime.
For Death came flying through the air
And stopped his flight at the dugout stair,
Touched his prey and left them there,
  Clay to clay.
He hid their bodies stealthily
In the soil of the land they fought to free
  And fled away.
Now over the grave abrupt and clear
  Three volleys ring;
And perhaps their brave young spirits hear
  The bugle sing:
"Go to sleep!
Go to sleep!)
Slumber well where the shell screamed and fell.
Let your rifles rest on the muddy floor,
You will not need them any more.
Danger's past;
Now at last,
Go to sleep!"

There is on earth no worthier grave
To hold the bodies of the brave
Than this place of pain and pride
Where they nobly fought and nobly died.
Never fear but in the skies
  Saints and angels stand
Smiling with their holy eyes
  On this new-come band.

St. Michael's sword darts through the air
And touches the aureole on his hair
As he sees them stand saluting there,
  His stalwart sons:
And Patrick, Brigid, Columkill.
Rejoice that in veins of warriors still
  The Gael's blood runs.
And up to Heaven's doorway floats,
  From the wood called Rouge Bouquet,
A delicate cloud of bugle notes
  That softly say:
"Farewell! Farewell.
Comrades true, born anew, peace to you!
Your souls shall be where the heroes are
And your memory shine like the morning-star.
Brave and dear,
Shield us here.
Farewell!"

427. *Martin*

WHEN I am tired of earnest men,
  Intense and keen and sharp and clever,
Pursuing fame with brush or pen,
Or counting metal disks forever,
Then from the halls of Shadowland,
Beyond the trackless purple sea,
Old Martin's ghost comes back to stand
Beside my desk and talk to me.

Still on his delicate pale face
A quizzical thin smile is showing,
His cheeks are wrinkled like fine lace,
His kind blue eyes are gay and glowing.
He wears a brilliant-hued cravat,
A suit to match his soft grey hair,
A rakish stick, a knowing hat,
A manner blithe and debonair.

How good that he who always knew
That being lovely was a duty,
Should have gold halls to wander through
And should himself inhabit beauty.
How like his old unselfish way
To leave those halls of splendid mirth
And comfort those condemned to stay
Upon the dull and sombre earth.

Some people ask: "What cruel chance
Made Martin's life so sad a story?"
Martin? Why, he exhaled romance,
And wore an overcoat of glory.
A fleck of sunlight in the street,
A horse, a book, a girl who smiled,
Such visions made each moment sweet
For this receptive ancient child.

Because it was old Martin's lot
To be, not make, a decoration,
Shall we then scorn him, having not
His genius of appreciation?

Rich joy and love he got and gave;
His heart was merry as his dress;
Pile laurel wreaths upon his grave
Who did not gain, but was, success!

428. *Trees*

I THINK that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with the rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

1890–

429. *At a Window Sill*

TO write a sonnet needs a quiet mind. . . .
I paused and pondered, tried again. To write. . . .
Raising the sash, I breathed the winter night:
Papers and small hot room were left behind.
Against the gusty purple, ribbed and spined
With golden slots and vertebrae of light
Men's cages loomed. Down sliding from a height
An elevator winked as it declined.

Coward! There is no quiet in the brain —
If pity burns it not, then beauty will:
Tinder it is for every blowing spark.
Uncertain whether this is bliss or pain
The unresting mind will gaze across the sill
From high apartment windows, in the dark.

430. *In an Auction Room*

(*Letter of John Keats to Fanny Brawne, Anderson Galleries, March 15, 1920.*)

HOW *about this lot?* said the auctioneer;
One hundred, may I say, just for a start?
Between the plum-red curtains, drawn apart,
A written sheet was held. . . . And strange to hear

(Dealer, would I were steadfast as thou art)
The cold quick bids. (*Against you in the rear!*)
The crimson salon, in a glow more clear
Burned bloodlike purple as the poet's heart.

Song that outgrew the singer! Bitter love
That broke the proud hot heart it held in thrall.
Poor script, where still those tragic passions move —
Eight hundred bid: fair warning: the last call:
The soul of Adonais, like a star. . . .
Sold for eight hundred dollars — Doctor R.!

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

1892-

431. *Exiled*

SEARCHING my heart for its true sorrow,
This is the thing I find to be:
That I am weary of words and people,
Sick of the city, wanting the sea;

Wanting the sticky, salty sweetness
Of the strong wind and shattered spray;
Wanting the loud sound and the soft sound
Of the big surf that breaks all day.

Always before about my dooryard,
Marking the reach of the winter sea,
Rooted in sand and dragging drift-wood,
Straggled the purple wild sweet-pea;

Always I climbed the wave at morning,
  Shook the sand from my shoes at night,
That now am caught beneath great buildings,
  Stricken with noise, confused with light.

If I could hear the green piles groaning
  Under the windy wooden piers,
See once again the bobbing barrels,
  And the black sticks that fence the weirs,

If I could see the weedy mussels
  Crusting the wrecked and rotting hulls,
Hear once again the hungry crying
  Overhead, of the wheeling gulls,

Feel once again the shanty straining
  Under the turning of the tide,
Fear once again the rising freshet,
  Dread the bell in the fog outside, —

I should be happy, — that was happy
  All day long on the coast of Maine!
I have a need to hold and handle
  Shells and anchors and ships again!

I should be happy, that am happy
  Never at all since I came here.
I am too long away from water.
  I have a need of water near.

432. *Wraith*

THIN Rain, whom are you haunting,
That you haunt my door? "
— Surely it is not I she's wanting;
Someone living here before —
" Nobody's in the house but me:
You may come in if you like and see."

Thin as thread, with exquisite fingers —
Have you seen her, any of you? —
Grey shawl, and leaning on the wind,
And the garden showing through?

Glimmering eyes, — and silent, mostly,
Sort of a whisper, sort of a purr,
Asking something, asking it over,
If you get a sound from her. —

Ever see her, any of you? —
Strangest thing I've ever known, —
Every night since I moved in,
And I came to be alone.

" Thin Rain, hush your knocking!
You may not come in!
This is I that you hear rocking;
Nobody's with me, nor has been! "

Curious, how she tried the window, —
Odd, the way she tries the door, —
Wonder just what sort of people
Could have had this house before. . . .

433. *Elegy Before Death*

THERE will be rose and rhododendron
When you are dead and under ground;
Still will be heard from white syringas
Heavy with bees, a sunny sound;

Still will the tamaracks be raining
After the rain has ceased, and still
Will there be robins in the stubble,
Brown sheep upon the warm green hill.

Spring will not ail nor autumn falter;
Nothing will know that you are gone,
Saving alone some sullen plough-land
None but yourself sets foot upon;

Saving the may-weed and the pig-weed
Nothing will know that you are dead, —
These, and perhaps a useless wagon
Standing beside some tumbled shed.

Oh, there will pass with your great passing
Little of beauty not your own, —
Only the light from common water,
Only the grace from simple stone.

434. *A Note From the Pipes*

PAN, blow your pipes and I will be
Your fern, your pool, your dream, your tree!

I heard you play, caught your swift eye,
"A pretty melody!" called I,
"Hail, Pan!" And sought to pass you by.

Now blow your pipes and I will sing
To your sure lips' accompanying!

Wild God, who lifted me from earth,
Who taught me freedom, wisdom, mirth,
Immortalized my body's worth, —

Blow, blow your pipes! And from afar
I'll come — I'll be your bird, your star,
Your wood, your nymph, your kiss, your rhyme,
And all your godlike summer-time!

435. *April on the Battlefields*

APRIL now walks the fields again,
Trailing her tearful leaves
And holding all her frightened buds against her heart:
Wrapt in her clouds and mists,
She walks,
Groping her way among the graves of men.

The green of earth is differently green,
A dreadful knowledge trembles in the grass,
And little wide-eyed flowers die too soon;
There is a stillness here —
After a terror of all raving sounds —
And birds sit close for comfort upon the boughs
Of broken trees.

April, thou grief!
What of thy sun and glad high wind,
Thy valiant hills and woods and eager brooks,
Thy thousand-petalled hopes?
The sky forbids thee sorrow, April!
And yet —
I see thee walking listlessly
Across those scars that once were joyous sod,
Those graves,
Those stepping-stones from life to life.

Death is an interruption between two heart-beats,
That I know —
Yet know not how I know —
But April mourns,
Trailing her tender green,
The passion of her green,
Across the passion of those fearful fields.

Yes, all the fields!
No barrier here,
No challenge in the night,
No stranger-land;
She passes with her perfect countersign,
Her green;

She wanders in her mournful garden,
Dropping her buds like tears,
Spreading her lovely grief upon the graves of man.

ALICE CORBIN

436. *Muy Vieja Mexicana*

I'VE seen her pass with eyes upon the road —
An old bent woman in a bronze-black shawl,
With skin as dried and wrinkled as a mummy's,
As brown as a cigar-box, and her voice
Like the low vibrant strings of a guitar.
And I have fancied from the girls about
What she was at their age, what they will be
When they are old as she. But now she sits
And smokes away each night, till dawn comes round,
Thinking, beside the piñons' flame, of days
Long past and gone, when she was young — content
To be no longer young, her epic done:

For a woman has work and much to do,
And it's good at the last to know it's through,
And still have time to sit alone,
To have some time you can call your own.
It's good at the last to know your mind
And travel the paths that you traveled blind,
To see each turn and even make
Trips in the byways you did not take —
But that, por Dios, is over and done,
It's pleasanter now in the way we've come;
It's good to smoke and none to say
What's to be done on the coming day,

No mouths to feed or coat to mend,
And none to call till the last long end.
Though one have sons and friends of one's own,
It's better at last to live alone.
For a man must think of food to buy,
And a woman's thoughts may be wild and high;
But when she is young she must curb her pride,
And her heart is tamed for the child at her side.
But when she is old her thoughts may go
Wherever they will, and none to know.
And night is the time to think and dream,
And not to get up with the dawn's first gleam;
Night is the time to laugh or weep,
And when dawn comes it is time to sleep . . .

When it's all over and there's none to care,
I mean to be like her and take my share
Of comfort when the long day's done,
And smoke away the nights, and see the sun
Far off, a shrivelled orange in a sky gone black,
Through eyes that open inward and look back.

MARGARET WIDDEMER

437. *If You Should Tire of Loving Me*

IF you should tire of loving me
Some one of our far days,
Oh never start to hide your heart
Or cover thought with praise.

For every word you would not say
Be sure my heart has heard,
So go from me all silently
Without a kiss or word;

For God must give you happiness,
And oh, it may befall
In listening long to Heaven-song
I may not care at all!

MARGUERITE WILKINSON

1883–

438. *The Robber in England*

I AM a robber from over the seas;
I have come stealing things like these:
The slant of the hills toward Parracombe Town,
The look of the sea from Porlock down,
The patchwork of fields with hedges between
Dividing the new-ploughed red from green
Like a magical quilt-stitch set to bind
Fields upon hills around and behind.
I have come stealing the tilt of the thatches
Where villages doze among the green patches,
Where each little house as the road winds around
Seems to have grown from a root in the ground,
For almost as natural as trees are they
With the dull brown thatch above the stone's old gray,
Of ancient plaster firm and mellow
In quiet tones of cream and yellow.
When I go home I shall carry away
Deep-drawn fragrance of Devon hay,

The teasing turn of a path like a dream
And the soothing flavor of Devonshire cream,
The fiery glance of poppies in corn,
The blessed light on a holy book
Through colored windows reverently borne
While overhead the sweet bells shook
For somebody married, somebody dead,
Or another hour of the ages sped.
Into my treasury I shall thrust
Heather-plunder and bracken-rust,
Thorn of holly and ivy-bud
And songs of all the singing brood,
With English voices cheery and sweet
And the patient look of English feet
Clumsily shod and moving slow
Wherever the paths of the good land go,
Or on streets of London that twist and wind
Like the whimsical humor of the English mind.
These and the angels weeping stone tears
In Westminster Abbey forever and ever,
And the knights that sound the hours with spears
In Wells Cathedral prompt and clever,
The combs the Romans used at Bath,
The Cheshire Cheese where Johnson made merry,
The Bloody Tower with its scenes of wrath
And the old Cathedral of Canterbury, —
These I have stolen, stolen away
To make them mine till my dying day;
And neither the King in Buckingham Palace
Nor the gracious Queen with her crown of gold
Will take them from me, for all without malice
What I have taken I mean to hold.

1884-

439. *The Adventurer*

HE came not in the red dawn
Nor in the blaze of noon,
And all the long bright highway
Lay lonely to the moon;

And nevermore, we know now,
Will he come wandering down
The breezy hollows of the hills
That gird the quiet town.

For he has heard a voice cry
A starry-faint "Ahoy!"
Far up the wind, and followed
Unquestioning after joy.

But we are long forgetting
The quiet way he went,
With looks of love and gentle scorn
So sweetly, subtly blent.

We cannot cease to wonder,
We who have loved him, how
He fares along the windy ways
His feet must travel now.

But we must draw the curtain
And fasten bolts and bars,
And talk here in the firelight
Of him beneath the stars.

440. *The Flock at Evening*

DOWN from the rocky western steep
Where now the sunset crumbles low,
The shepherd draws his sun-drowsed sheep
Ringed in a rosy glow.
Along the dusty leaf-hung lane,
Now blurred in shade, now bright again,
They trail in splendor, aureoled
And mystical in clouded gold.

As insubstantial as a dream
They huddle homeward by my door, —
From what Theocritean stream
Or what Thessalian shore?
What ancient air surrounds them still,
As though from some Arcadian hill
They shuffled through the afterglow
Across the fields of long ago?

Is this the flock that Bion kept,
Or Moschus, piping reedy tunes
While the long ilex shadows crept
Through ancient afternoons?
In some still Arethusan wood,
Ages agone, have they not stood
Wondering, circle-wise and mute,
Round some remote Sicilian flute?

I think that they have gazed across
The dazzle of Ionian seas
From the green capes of Tenedos
Or sea-washed Cyclades,

And loitered through the twilight down
The hills that gird some Attic town
Still shining in the early gloam
Beside the murmur of the foam.

What dream is this? I know the croft,
  Deep in this dale, where they were born;
I know their wind-swept hills aloft
  Among the rustling corn;
Yet, while they glimmer slowly by,
A younger earth, a fairer sky
Seem round them, and they move sublime
Among the dews of dawning time.

441. *"Whence Cometh My Help"*

LET me sleep among the shadows of the mountains when I die,
  In the murmur of the pines and sliding streams,
Where the long day loiters by
Like a cloud across the sky,
  Where the moon-drenched night is musical with dreams.

Lay me down within a canyon of the mountains, far away,
  In a valley filled with dim and rosy light,
Where the flashing rivers play
Out across the golden day,
  And a noise of many waters brims the night.

All the wisdom, all the beauty I have lived for, unaware,
  Came upon me by the banks of upland rills;
I have seen God walking there
In the solemn soundless air
  When the morning wakened wonder in the hills.

I am what the mountains made me, of their green and
gold and gray,
Of the dawnlight and the moonlight and the foam. . . .
Mighty mothers far away,
Ye who washed my soul in spray,
I am coming, mother mountains, coming home.

When I draw my dreams about me, when I leave the
darkling plain
Where my soul forgets to soar and learns to plod,
I shall go back home again
To the kingdoms of the rain,
To the blue purlieus of heaven, nearer God.

Where the rose of dawn blooms earlier across the miles
of mist,
Between the tides of sundown and moonrise,
I shall keep a lover's tryst
With the gold and amethyst,
With the stars for my companions in the skies.

442. *Earth-Born*

NO lapidary's heaven, no brazier's hell for me,
For I am made of dust and dew and stream and plant
and tree;
I am akin to boulders, I am cousin to the mud,
And all the winds of all the skies made music in my blood.

I want a brook and pine trees; I want a storm to blow
Loud-lunged across the looming hills, with rain and sleet and snow.
Put me not off with diadems and thrones of chrysoprase . . .
I want the winds of northern nights and wild March days.

My blood runs red with sunset, my body is white with rain,
Upon my heart the skies of dawn have set their scarlet stain.
My thoughts are green with springtime. Among the meadow rue
I think my very soul is growing green and gold and blue.

What will be left, I wonder, when Death has washed me clean
Of dust and dew and sundown and April's virgin green?
If there's enough to make a ghost, I'll bring it back again
To the little lovely earth that bore me, body, soul, and brain.

CARL SANDBURG

443. *Under The Harvest Moon*

UNDER the harvest moon,
When the soft silver
Drips shimmering
Over the garden nights,

Death, the gray mocker
Comes and whispers to you
As a beautiful friend
Who remembers.
Under the summer roses,
When the flagrant crimson
Lurks in the dusk
Of the wild red leaves,
Love, with little hands,
Comes and touches you
With a thousand memories,
And asks you
Beautiful unanswerable questions.

ROBERT HILLYER

444. *To a Scarlatti Passepied*

STRANGE little tune, so thin and rare,
Like scents of roses of long ago,
Quavering lightly upon the strings
Of a violin, and dying there
With a dancing flutter of delicate wings;
Thy courtly joy and thy gentle woe,
Thy gracious gladness and plaintive fears
Are lost in the clamorous age we know,
And pale like a moon in the lurid day;
A phantom of music, strangely fled
From the princely halls of the quiet dead,
Down the long lanes of the vanished years
Echoing frailly and far away.

445. *From a Sonnet Sequence*

I

QUICKLY and pleasantly the seasons blow
Over the meadows of eternity,
As wave on wave the pulsings of the sea
Merge and are lost, each in the other's flow.
Time is no lover; it is only he
That is the one unconquerable foe,
He is the sudden tempest none can know,
Winged with swift winds that none may hope to flee.

Fair child of loveliness, these endless fears
Are nought to us; let us be gods of stone,
And set our images beyond the years
On some high mount where we can be alone;
And thou shalt ever be as now thou art,
And I shall watch thee with untroubled heart.

XXXIV

Long after both of us are scattered dust,
And alien souls, perchance, shall read of thee,
Guessing the passions that have crushed from me
These poor confessions of my love and trust;
Ah, well I know how heartless they will be,
For some will laugh, and others, more unjust,
Whose minds know not of love, but only lust,
Will stain the vesture of our memory.

And yet a few there may be who will feel
My true devotion and my deep desires,

And know that these unhappy lines reveal
Only new images in changeless fires;
And they, indeed, will linger with a sigh
To think that beauty such as thine must die.

JOHN G. NEIHARDT

1881–

446. *When I Have Gone Weird Ways*

WHEN I have finished with this episode,
Left the hard, uphill road,
And gone weird ways to seek another load,
O Friend, regret me not, nor weep for me,
Child of Infinity!

Nor dig a grave, nor rear for me a tomb
To say with lying writ: "Here in the gloom
He who loved bigness takes a narrow room,
Content to pillow here his weary head,
For he is dead."

But give my body to the funeral pyre,
And bid the laughing fire,
Eager and strong and swift, like my desire,
Scatter my subtle essence into space,
Free me of time and place.

And sweep the bitter ashes from the hearth,
Fling back the dust I borrowed from the earth
Into the chemic broil of death and birth,
The vast alembic of the cryptic scheme,
Warm with the master-dream.

And thus, O little house that sheltered me,
Dissolve again in wind and rain, to be
Part of the cosmic weird economy.
And, O, how oft with new life shalt thou lift
Out of the atom-drift!

447. *The Poet's Town*

X

BUT still did the Mighty Makers
Stir in the common sod;
The corn through its awful acres
Trembled and thrilled with God!

More than a man was the sower,
Lured by a man's desire,
For a triune Bride walked close at his side—
Dew and Dust and Fire!

More than a man was the plowman
Shouting his gee and haw;
For a something dim kept pace with him,
And ever the poet saw;

Till the winds of the cosmic struggle
Made of his flesh a flute,
To echo the tune of a whirlwind rune
Unto the million mute.

XI

Son of the Mother of mothers,
The womb and the tomb of Life,
With Fire and Air for brothers
And a clinging Dream for a wife;

Ever the soul of the dreamer
Strove with its mortal mesh,
And the lean flame grew till it fretted through
The last thin links of flesh.

Oh, rending the veil asunder,
He fled to mingle again
With the dred Orestean thunder,
The Lear of the driven rain!

XII

Once in a cycle the comet
Doubles its lonesome track.
Enriched with the tears of a thousand years,
Aeschylus wanders back.

Ever inweaving, returning,
The near grows out of the far;
And Homer shall sing once more in a swing
Of the austere Polar Star.

Then what of the lonesome dreamer
With the lean blue flame in his breast?
And who was your clown for a day, O Town,
The strange, unbidden guest?

DANA BURNET

1888–

448. *"Who Dreams Shall Live"*

WHO *dreams* shall live! And if we do not dream
Then we shall build no Temple into Time.
Yon dust cloud, whirling slow against the sun,
Was yesterday's *cathedral*, stirred to gold
By heedless footsteps of a passing world.
The faiths of *stone* and *steel* are failed of proof,
The King who made religion of a *Sword*
Passes, and is forgotten in a day.
The crown he wore rots at a lily's root,
The rose unfurls her banners o'er his dust.

The dreamer dies, but never dies fair dream,
Though Death shall call the whirlwind to his aid,
Enlist men's passions, trick their hearts with hate,
Still the fair Vision lives! Say nevermore
That *dreams* are fragile things. What else endures
Of all this *broken world save only dreams!*

449. *The Riddle*

WE were laying the road to a Riddle,
And never a man knew why,
Nor Oleson, nor little Giuseppe,
Nor Sandy McGregor, nor I;
It lay on the hills before us,
And the hills were strange with its gleam,
And mayhap the Thing was a City,
And mayhap 'twas only a dream.

We started our picks in the morning,
  We quit when we came to the stars,
We held out our hands to the camp-fire
  And told off the miles by the scars;
Long miles that we laid with our labor.
  And never a man knew why,
Nor Oleson, nor little Giuseppe,
  Nor Sandy McGregor, nor I.

We sat by the fire at twilight
  And guessed at it gleaming there,
With a little red cloud above it
  Like the rose in a woman's hair!
And all of us held by the guesses
  And toiled to the visions they made,
And some of us wondered, and cursed it,
  And some of us wondered — and prayed.

But each of us cherished his vision
  And fought for his guess in the gloam,
And one of us dreamed it was heaven,
  And one of us dreamed it was Home.
Old Sandy McGregor saw heather,
  And moorland and thistle-blown sod —
And little Giuseppe stood forward,
  And guessed it was Naples — or God.

The Oleson, the Swede, broke the silence;
  He surged to his feet like a tide
And said it was Snow on a Mountain,
  And turned to his blanket — and cried.

But how could I tell them my vision?
A rose in a woman's hair —
Mary — and Spring in Killarney —
And never a face more fair!

We were new and strange to the country
And we laid the long road through,
And all of us had our guesses,
But none of us really knew.
Old Sandy, he toiled to the heather,
And little Giusep' to the sea,
The Swede laid his road to a mountain,
But it was Killarney to me!

Four of us, laying a roadway,
And never a man knew why,
Nor Oleson, nor little Giuseppe,
Nor Sandy McGregor, nor I.
The road ran on to a Riddle,
The hills were strange with its gleam!
And mayhap the Thing was a City,
And mayhap 'twas only a dream.

450. *The Bread-Line*

THE word went down the moaning street,
Through the rotting rooms where the children cry
And the broken mothers die —
Bread! Free Bread!
"Go forth," they said,
"And see if the little whispers lie."

The coughing men went forth to see.
They came in herds like starving goats,
And they shook in their threadbare coats;
"Is it true," they said,
"That ye give us bread?"
(And their hands clutched white at their icy throats.)

"It is true," said the men by the stacked brown loaves,
And they smiled with a wonderful, slow, sad smile.
But the line stretched half a mile —
"Bread, free bread,
It is life," they said
"It is life and hope for a little while."

I said to a starved soul passing in,
"The theory's wrong — all wrong, you know,
A wise man found it so."
He raised his head,
And with blanched lips said,
"Was the wise man ever hungry, Bo?"

451. *Ballad of Dead Girls*

SCARCE had they brought the bodies down
Across the withered floor
Than Max Rogosky thundered at
The District Leader's door.

Scarce had the white-lipped mothers come
To search the fearful noon
Than little Max stood shivering
In Tom McTodd's saloon.

In Tom McTodd's saloon he stood,
Beside the silver bar,
Where any honest lad may stand
And sell his vote at par.

"Ten years I've paid the System's tax."
(The words fell quivering, raw),
"And now I want the thing I bought —
Protection from the law."

The Leader smiled a crooked smile.
"Your doors were locked," he said.
"You've overstepped the limit, Max —
A hundred women . . . dead!"

Then Max Rogosky gripped the bar,
And shivered where he stood,
"You listen now to me," he cried,
"Like business fellers should.

"I've paid for all my hundred dead,
I've paid, I've paid, I've paid. . . ."
His ragged laughter rang, and died —
For he was sore afraid.

"I've paid for wooden hall and stair,
I've paid to strain my floors,
I've paid for rotten fire-escapes,
For all my bolted doors.

"Your fat inspectors came and came,
I crossed their hands with gold,
And now I want the thing I bought,
The thing that System sold."

The District Leader filled a glass
With whiskey from the bar;
(The little silver counter where
He bought men's souls at par.)

And well he knew that he must give
The thing that he had sold,
Else men should doubt the System's word,
Keep back the System's gold.

The whiskey burned beneath his tongue:
"A hundred women — dead!
I guess the Boss can fix it up;
Go home — and hide," he said.

All day they brought the bodies down
From Max Rogosky's place.
And, oh, the fearful touch of flame
On hand and breast and face!

All day the white-lipped mothers came
To search the sheeted dead,
And Horror strode the blackened walls
Where Death had walked in red.

But Max Rogosky did not weep
(He knew that tears were vain);
He paid the System's price and lived
To lock his doors again.

452. *The Ragged Piper*

THERE is a ragged Piper walks the byways of the town,
His eyes are small and twinkling, and his cheeks are full and brown;
He strolls the streets at twilight when the sun is sinking low,
And he sings fa, la, la lorum and fa, la, la, lum, ti, o!

A stranger song was never piped beneath the stars o' June,
And yet I trow it has a worth beyond the common tune,
Whatever you would have it mean, it means just that, you know,
With its fa, la, la, la, lorum and its fa, la, lum, ti, o!

The goodwives of the town come out and lean above the gate,
And fold their hands across their hearts and wait, and wait, and wait;
And when they hear the Piper's song they lift their hands and say,
"He's singing o' the silken gown I looked at yesterday."

Fa, la, la, la, la, lorum and fa, la, la, lum, ti, o!
You hear it in the highways when the sun is sinking low,
And if you're just turned twenty, and your heart is in the moon,
You'll swear it's love that runs so sweet within the Piper's tune.

Across the village thresholds with the roses climbing over,
The pretty lasses wait until they hear the merry rover,

Then down they dance with laugh and shout, to tread the
moonbeams' lace,
And de'il a one but thinks the tune has praised her to her
face.

Fa, la, la, la, la, lorum and fa, la, la, lum, ti, o!
You hear it in the byways when the sun is sinking low;
And the wee tots at the windows, and the lovers by the
streams,
They wonder how the Piper guessed the song to fit their
dreams!

Beside the dying embers in their corners of the hearth
The old men sit and plan their ways across a fairer earth,
And on their ears the Piper's song falls like a faint caress
Of old forgotten voices blurred with new-world tender-
ness.

Fa, la, la, la, la, lorum, and fa, la, la, lum, ti, o!
You hear it through the houses when the sun is sinking
low,
And the poets in their attics don the plumage of their
quills,
And send their souls by wing o' song to God's eternal
hills.

I've never seen this fellow with his silly wordless tune,
But to-night I heard his merry pipe beneath the full gold
moon;
And straightway I began to pen this brilliant ballad-o,
Fa, la, la, la, lorum, and fa, la, la, lum, ti, o!

453. *Palmetto Town*

SEA–ISLAND winds sweep through Palmetto Town,
Bringing with piney tang the old romance
Of Pirates and of smuggling gentlemen;
And tongues as languorous as southern France
Flow down her streets like water-talk at fords;
While through iron gates where pickaninnies sprawl,
The sound floats back, in rippled banjo chords,
From lush magnolia shade where mockers call.
Mornings, the flower-women hawk their wares —
Bronze caryatids of a genial race,
Bearing the bloom-heaped baskets on their heads;
Lithe, with their arms akimbo in wide grace,
Their jasmine nods jestingly at cares —
Turbaned they are, deep-chested, straight and tall,
Bandying old English words now seldom heard,
But sweet as Provençal.
Dreams peer like prisoners through her harp-like gates,
From molten gardens mottled with gray-gloom,
Where lichened sundials shadow ancient dates,
And deep piazzas loom.
Fringing her quays are frayed palmetto posts,
Where clipper ships once moored along the ways,
And fanlight doorways, sunstruck with old ghosts,
Sicken with loves of her lost yesterdays.
Often I halt upon some gabled walk,
Thinking I see the ear-ringed *picaroons*,
Slashed with a sash or Spanish *folderols*,
Gambling for moidores or for gold doubloons.

But they have gone where night goes after day,
And the old streets are gay with whistled tunes,
Bright with the lilt of scarlet parasols,
Carried by honey-voiced young octoroons.

MARGARET LEE ASHLEY

454. *In April*

IF I am slow forgetting,
It is because the sun
Has such old tricks of setting
When April days are done.

The soft spring sunlight traces
Old patterns — green and gold;
The flowers have no new faces,
The very buds are old!

If I am slow forgetting —
Ah, well, come back and see
The same old sunbeams petting
My garden-plots for me.

Come smell the green things growing,
The boxwood after rain;
See where old beds are showing
Their slender spears again.

At dusk, that fosters dreaming —
Come back at dusk and rest,
And watch our old star gleaming
Against the primrose west.

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